

# **Forshaw and Abercrombie's green legacy: The successes and failures of two London parks**

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*Front cover: Burgess Park and the London skyline.*

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I would like to thank all those who gave their time to be interviewed as part of this project and my supervisor David Banister who provided excellent advice throughout. Also to Urban Initiatives and CABI Space for getting me interested in parks in the first place. Gratitude to Huong, Mum and Dad for all your support.

This thesis is dedicated those who lost their homes or workplaces in order that two new parks be created.

## **Abstract**

In the 1943 County of London Plan, Forshaw and Abercrombie proposed a significant increase in the provision of green space focusing on areas of deficiency. Of the planned open space system, only two major parks were created: Mile End Park in Tower Hamlets and Burgess Park in Southwark. These parks were created incrementally over the second half of the twentieth century and remain essentially unfinished. Since the mid-1990s, both parks have received significant capital investment. This thesis uses a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data – drawn mainly from a set of in-depth interviews with key players involved in the parks' development – to understand their successes and failings. It has found that Mile End Park has become significantly more successful in the last ten years and is now performing relatively well. Using the chosen measures Burgess Park has been found to have some strengths but is significantly under performing. The thesis then explores the key factors that led to these differing outcomes. These include the continued influence of key individuals, an enabling institutional context, effective partnership working with consensus on the future direction of the park, access to significant amounts of capital funding and ring-fenced ongoing revenue funding, innovative and high-quality design, a complementary mix of uses, a varied and well-publicised events programme and effective community involvement throughout the process.

## 1.0 Introduction

*Conventionally, neighbourhood parks or park-like open spaces are considered boons conferred on the deprived populations of cities.*

*(Jacobs 1961: p89)*

Parks have long been used to overcome urban problems. During the great wave of urbanisation that occurred after the start of the industrial revolution and throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Hall 1998) commentators began to link social deprivation to poor living conditions. As a response Victorian parks were 'set up as a counterpoint to urban characteristics of density, the street form, and the intensity of the workplace.' (Worpole and Greenhalgh 1995: p64). They were 'utilitarian schemes to improve the health and character of the poor' (Turner, 1987: p90).

All large parks in London prior to World War II had been developed from existing open spaces, hunting grounds, gardens, commons and heaths which had been protected from the rapid and largely unplanned growth of London after the industrial revolution. Because of the uneven distribution of these parks, gardens or squares many Londoners had little or no access to open spaces.

In the 1943 County of London Plan Forshaw and Abercrombie analysed the existing 'maldistribution and deficiencies' of open space and proposed to clear large swathes of existing housing and industrial buildings in order to create an open space system.

The massive political, financial and social hurdles to carrying out the plan meant that much of it remained unrealised. However in two significant cases, the London County Council (London County Council) embarked on an incremental process of land assembly. Mile End Park in Tower Hamlets and Burgess Park in Peckham, Southwark, were created through the clearance of bomb damaged sites, so-called slum housing and industrial buildings over a period of several decades by a number of different agencies.

In 1996 a successful bid from the Mile End Park Partnership (MEPP) to the Millennium Commission (MC) raised £22 million and created a landmark park with an iconic green bridge. The transformation of Mile End Park has resulted in claims that not only is it a successful public space, but that it has been a key factor in the wider regeneration of the area (CABE Space 2005a, GLA 2003, TCPA 2004, Tibbatts et. al. 2004, ODPM 2002a, Urban Green Spaces Taskforce 2002). In contrast, Burgess Park failed in two MC bids for large-scale investment, instead undergoing a number of incremental improvements. It has largely been ignored in the literature and those who have commented have done so in negative terms (Burton 1999, Groundwork Southwark 2002).

This thesis will compare the successes and failings of these two parks that have similar histories and locations and explore their development over the last ten years. This work will

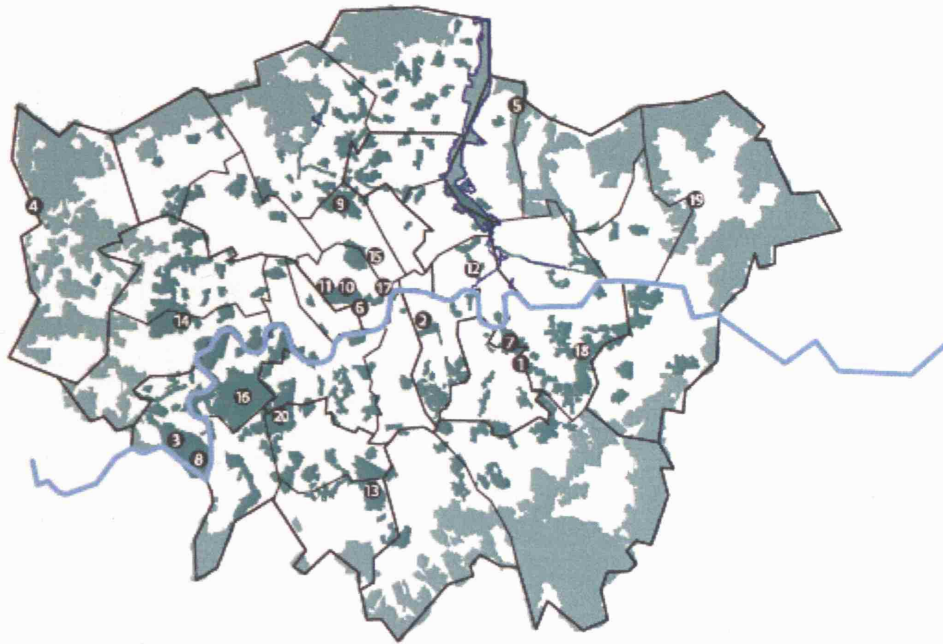


Figure 1: Metropolitan Parks and Open Spaces Network in London (GLA 2004). This shows Mile End Park (12) and Burgess Park (2).

assess whether these two unique parks, which were cleared from the urban fabric as 'boons to local populations' have delivered significant benefits, as understand the key factors that have influenced their outcomes to date.

The literature review outlines the way in which success for urban parks can be analysed and underpinned. The methodology section summarises the research and evaluation approach. Both Mile End Park and Burgess Park are described in detailed case studies with a focus on their wider regeneration effects. In the analysis section their different outcomes are compared and discussed. Finally, the conclusion highlights the key findings of the thesis.



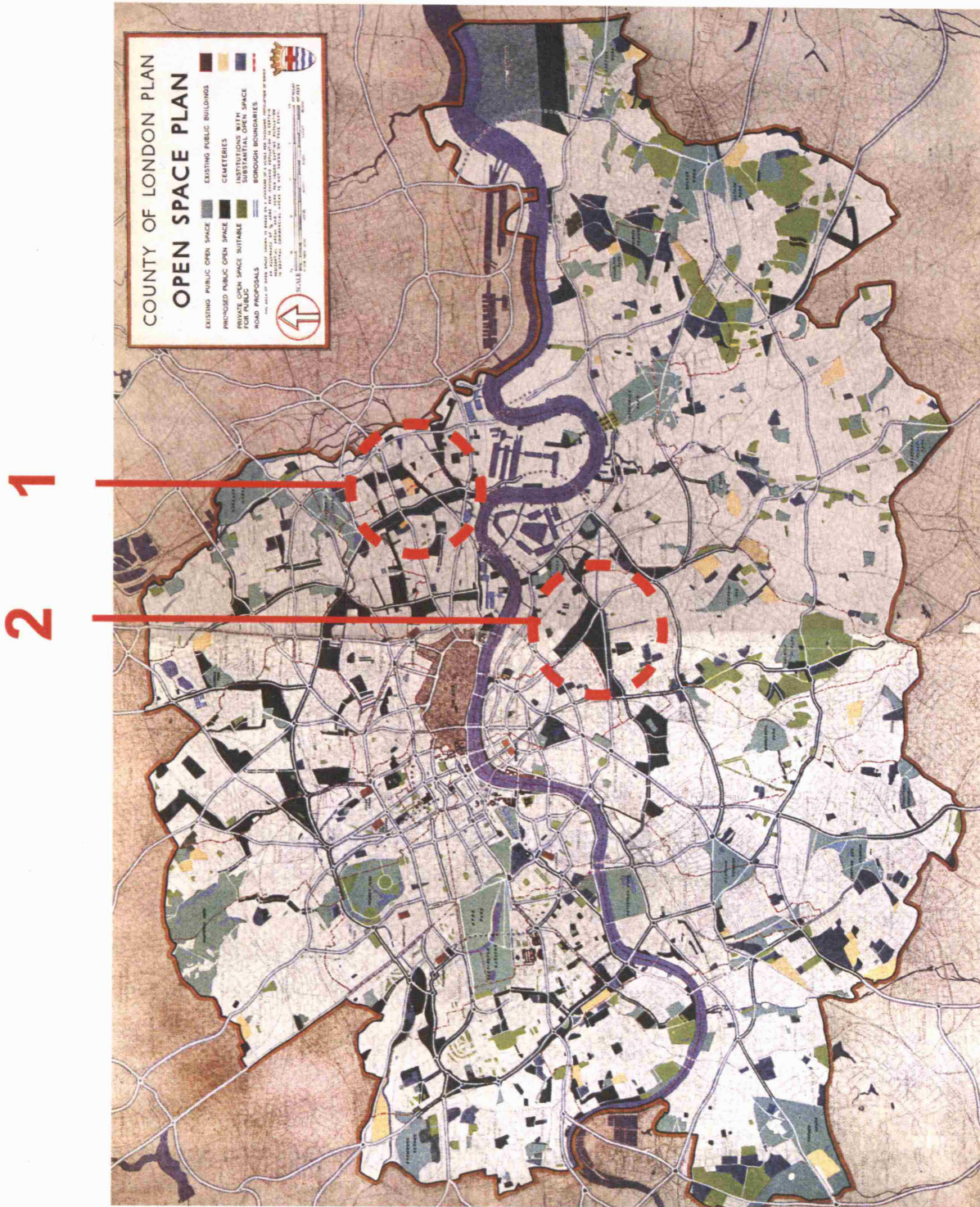


Figure 2: Mile End Park (1) and North Camberwell Open Space (2) (which would become Burgess Park are shown on this plan included in the County of London Plan. These spaces formed part of a park that would allow 'the town dweller to get from doorstep to open country through an easy flow of space'. (Forshaw and Abercrombie 1943)



## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 What is a successful park?

The success of any element in the urban fabric can be related to how well it meets its aims and responds to its context. One of the objectives of the 1943 Plan was to provide 'adequate open space for both recreation and rest (as) a vital factor in maintaining and improving the health of the people' (p36). Open space planning was largely a quantitative rather than a qualitative discipline based on the premise that too much open space was always better than too little. Simply by being open and green, a space would provide some relief from the intensity of urban life. Quantitative approaches continue to form the basis of open space policies in local planning documents (CABE Space 2005c). However this rather narrow view of success has come under increasing scrutiny in the literature,

Worpole (2001) argues that the role of urban parks should reflect wider changes in urban society:

*'Urban landscapes not only have to address traditional park requirements for horticulture, landscaping and 'escape' from the urban milieu, but they also have to respond to the commercialisation of leisure in the world beyond, to a declining public purse for the maintenance and management costs associated with the provision of a free amenity ... to a growing environmental concern to 'green the city' and to make it much more ecologically sustainable and self-supporting'. (p1)*

Parks need to demonstrate a wide range of benefits to both local and potentially city-wide users in order to justify their existence as unbuilt spaces within cities. This is especially true in London in the context of almost limitless alternative pastimes, increasing individual mobility, greater pressure to provide homes and workplaces in built up areas, and competition for limited local authority funding.

Many supporters of urban parks appropriate the lexicon of urban regeneration in the way they claim that successful parks offer surrounding communities a wide range of benefits (CABE Space 2003, CABE Space 2005a, ODPM 2004a). McNroy (2000) notes that many cities have put the transformation of the public realm at the forefront of urban regeneration<sup>1</sup> even though commentators such as Dunnett et al. (2002) recognise that the empirical research linking urban parks and wider regeneration is in its infancy.

Woolley (2003) and CABE Space (2003) have conducted a wide-ranging literature review of the empirical evidence of the wider effects of green space and found that this indicates significant social, health, environmental and economic benefits for adjacent communities. The majority of the literature, however, tends to focus on a single indicator (such as property

<sup>1</sup> Notable examples include Barcelona's public space and park creation programme, the regeneration of Central Park in New York, and the continuous development of new parks in Paris.



value or mental health) and the positive effects of 'good' green spaces, rather than the negative effects of 'bad' ones. The following table summarises the more detailed literature review found in Appendix A. This review suggests a series of success indicators which might be used in this study:

Dimension	Benefit or Success indicator - the presence/amount of:
Social	Relaxation and solitary activities Social Interaction, communal activities and inclusion Sport, exercise, mental health and physical wellbeing Learning and development – especially for children
Economic	Direct employment of staff and purchasing of resources for construction and management Direct production of food, energy or other resources Indirect impact on property values, inward investment and tourism Indirect impact on business vitality and turnover Indirect impact on image of place
Environmental	Climate amelioration and carbon sequestration Provision of habitats and biodiversity Flood prevention

Table 1: Benefits of urban green spaces identified in the literature review.

## 2.2 Underlying reasons for success

Although a study can demonstrate the outcomes of a park, it is important to understand the underlying reasons for its success. In a classic study Alan Tate (2001) studied twenty urban parks in North America and Western Europe, concluding that a number of common themes emerged as factors for successful parks:

- The relationship with its surroundings, its location and accessibility
- Its design
- The development process
- The management of the space.

These factors are explored in more detail below:

### 2.2.1 Location and Connections

Like any other form of development, the location of a park is of critical importance to its

success. Its social and land-use context has a major impact on its success. Jacobs (1961) argues that:

*'Parks are volatile places ... (they) can and do add great attraction to neighbourhoods that people find attractive for a great variety of other uses. They further depress neighbourhoods that people find unattractive for a wide variety of other uses, for they exaggerate the dullness, the emptiness' (p103).*

For metropolitan parks the quality of connections with local and regional populations are likely to be important in ensuring their success. However in Tate's study, 'the visitors to even the largest parks tended to live or work relatively close to them' (2001, p198).

### 2.2.2 Design

In recent years, the UK government has placed design at the centre of its planning policy (DETR 1999, ODPM 2005a). Design is both the product – and the process – of shaping the public realm to meet local needs, make the most of existing opportunities and create a sense of place. Like other creative disciplines, the design of public parks and green spaces has changed radically over time (Jellicoe & Jellicoe 1987). According to CABI Space (2005c), the qualities of good design for parks are sustainability, character and distinctiveness, definition and enclosure, connectivity and accessibility, legibility, adaptability, inclusiveness and biodiversity.

### 2.2.3 Development Process

Dunnett et al. (2002) present the example of Sheffield's Green Estates project as a model for wider regeneration. The key factors for success focus on the quality of the process of developing urban green space such as funding structure, availability of professional expertise and effective partnership working over a period of years.

Tate (2001) also identifies the involvement of key individuals and access to sufficient capital funds during the development process as key requirements for success. Capital funding for parks in the UK has increased in recent years, in line with the higher profile that parks and green spaces have attained<sup>2</sup>. The most significant investment has been made by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

### 2.2.4 Management and Revenue Funding

CABI (2004b) studied eleven international examples of good practice in urban green space management from which they drew the following success factors:

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<sup>2</sup> Since 1996 the Heritage Lottery Fund has spent £320 million in around 200 urban parks of heritage value – a criterion which excludes both Burgess and Mile End Parks

Dimension	Factor
Political	Strong and continued political leadership and commitment
	Adequate and reliable resources, with long-term and secure funding from independent sources
	Strong and effective lobbying by green space advocates to demonstrate the value of green space and ensure that resources are not diverted elsewhere
	Good collaborative partnerships with a range of public and private stakeholders
Managerial	An effective and well-developed process of community engagement and involvement in green space management
	Well-trained and committed staff who operate in a stable organisational environment
	Effective monitoring of outcomes that feed back into decision-making
	Efficient management structures that devolve responsibility to the appropriate levels and have some degree of political and financial independence

Table 2: Best practice in management of urban parks (CABE Space 2004b)

These factors are explored in more detail below

#### *Partnership working and community involvement*

Partnership working, although complex and challenging, is a core element of current regeneration discourse (McInroy 2000) in order to bring together a range of interested parties and available resources. The involvement of the community is seen as critical to ensure local ownership (Dunnett et al. 2002), long-term sustainability of the project (McInroy 2000) and responds to the criticism and failures of top-down regeneration initiatives.

#### *Stable working environment and skills*

Various studies (CABE Space 2004d, 2004b and Urban Green Spaces Taskforce 2002) found that many local authority parks departments have suffered from almost continuous reorganisation and cuts. Parks have been subsumed into other departments as varied as 'leisure', 'highways', 'culture' and 'street cleaning'. The role of in-house park workers has been 'deskilled' by landscape contractors. These companies tend to use standardised methods of maintenance, which are not necessarily sensitive to quality ecological management. This has contributed towards low morale and poor management of parks. Research conducted for CABE Space (2004d) highlights the acute skills shortages in park planning, management and maintenance.

### *Funding*

In 1999 the Public Parks Assessment (Urban Parks Forum 2001) painted a bleak picture of the quality of the UK's parks, blaming massive cumulative under investment. Local authority managed parks are resourced through the Environmental, Protective and Cultural Services funding block for expenditure that does not have its own budget. The Assessment found that fewer local authorities are ring-fencing allocations within the block. Providing recreation amenities, including parks and green spaces, is not mandatory, and can be seen as a peripheral and therefore more expendable service.

## **2.3 Summary**

The literature review has suggested that urban parks need to justify their existence in wider terms and identified a set of social, economic and environment indicators. Furthermore the review indicates that there may be a number of underlying factors that generate this success. This raises the following questions for the two case studies:

1. How well do they perform against wider social, economic and environmental indicators?
2. What are the underlying reasons for their success or failure?

## **3.0 Methodology**

Mile End Park and Burgess Park represent an opportunity to compare two parks with very similar histories, of similar scales, situated in areas with similar characteristics (see section 4.0). Because of the similar starting points of the parks in the mid-1990s, it was decided to focus the analysis on the period between 1995 and 2005. This period was sufficiently long to explore the impact of different interventions and policies and was in recent memory.

This study uses qualitative data, supported by quantitative data where available to construct two in-depth comparative case studies. Quantitative data on its own would be insufficient as it is both extremely limited and prone to distortion by external factors such as demographic changes, regeneration programmes and wider economic shifts. Therefore it plays a supporting role to qualitative data uncovered through in-depth interviews. These were structured in such a way as to identify the links between the ways in which the parks had been developed and managed and the success criteria identified in the literature review.

This study included the following phases of research:

1. A desktop review of the literature and policy that relate to urban parks and their wider social, economic and environmental impacts (section 2.0).
2. A literature review, data collection and analysis, site visits and photographic surveys of the two case studies (section 4.0). Analysis methods included taking static snapshot surveys of users (see Appendix B) and analysing all press articles that mentioned the parks to understand how their image has changed over time (see Appendix C).
3. Qualitative data on the parks was gathered through structured interviews with at least ten individuals who were or are critically involved in the development or management of each of the two case parks. The individuals were selected to ensure that views from a range of stakeholders were incorporated. These are shown in Appendix D.
4. A comparison of the successes and failings and the underlying factors was conducted (section 5.0)

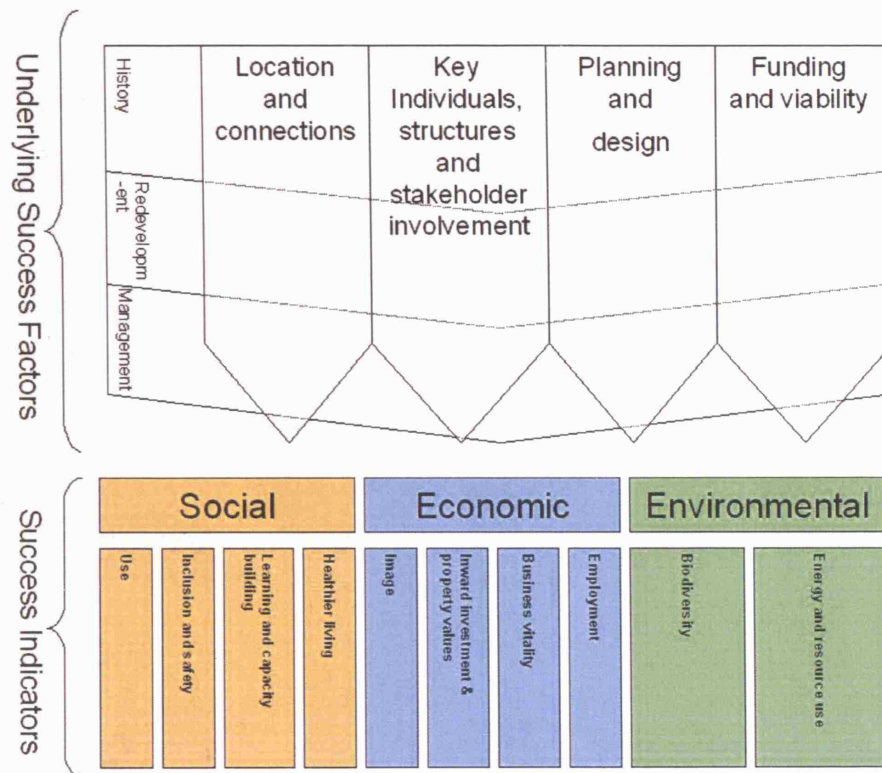


Figure 3 summarises the approach to the conceptual framework developed from the literature review.

## 4.0 The Case Studies

### 4.1 Common Historical development

Following the end of WWII the LCC began incremental development of the two sites. This started with the bombed sites, followed by the compulsory purchase of commercial buildings as they became available and dwellings once they were designated as unfit for habitation. The pace of clearance was slow – partly because of the use of the cleared land for prefabricated housing in order to meet the great need for homes after the war. Delays

#### DEVELOPMENT OF MILE END PARK

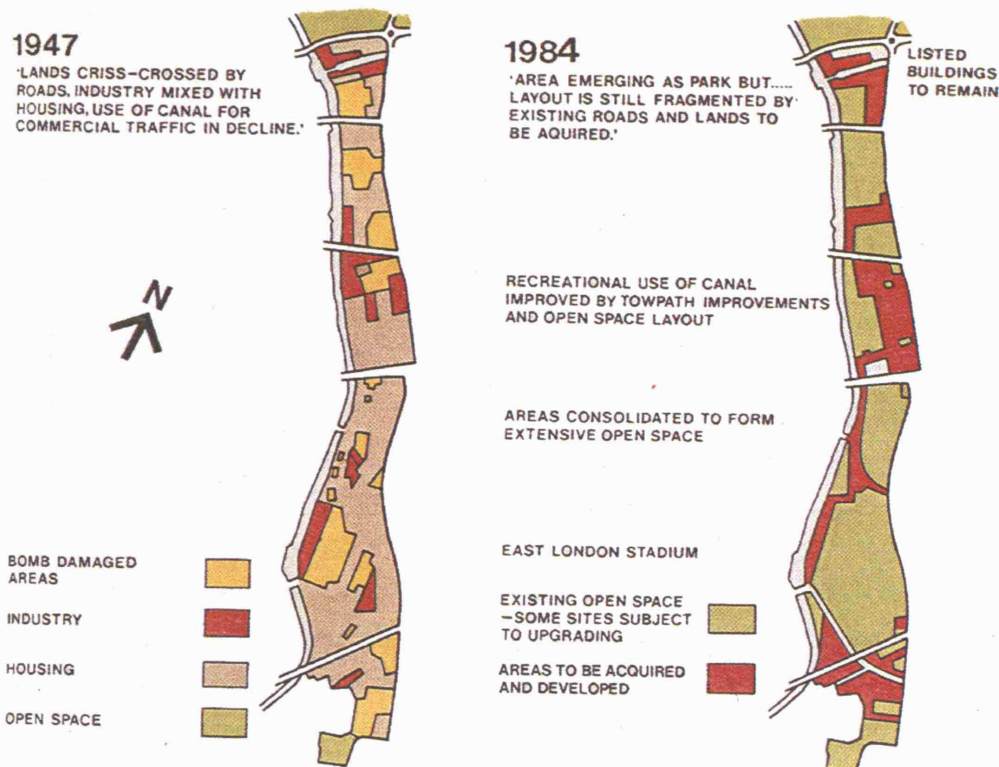


Figure 4 shows the development of Mile End Park. A similar incremental process occurred at Burgess Park.

also occurred due to the reorganisation of local government and transfer of the sites to the Greater London Council (GLC) in 1965, multiple land ownerships, rerouting of utilities and legal procedures (Bellamy 1981).

As a sign of the social and political tensions aroused by the ongoing clearance, the London Boroughs of Southwark (LBS) and Tower Hamlets (LBTH) began to designate overlapping

Figure 5: The clearance of buildings to create Burgess Park c. 1970 (image: Eddie Brazil)



conservation areas (following the passing of the Civic Amenities Act 1967), which in effect meant that the parks would never be completed as originally envisaged.

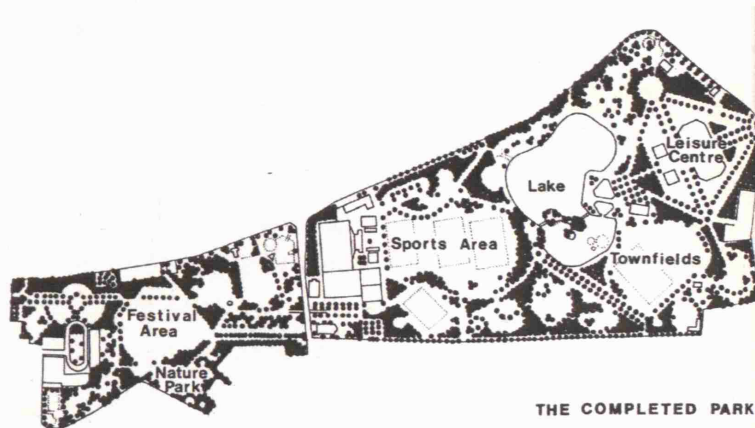


Figure 6 (above): The master plan for Burgess Park c. 1984. This plan includes areas that were never cleared of housing. Very little of this plan was ever built. (Image: GLC 1985: p41)

Figure 7 (right): Mile End Masterplan c. 1984. The GLC Landscape Architects Department had devised a masterplan for the park creating a series of 'grass spaces within a small-scale matrix of mass-planted woodland ... in deliberate contrast to neighbouring Victoria Park'. Although never completed, a significant number of trees shown were planted and still remain today (Image: GLC 1985: p41).

Upon the abolition of the GLC in 1986, both parks were transferred in a semi-complete state to their respective local authorities. A lack of resources and skills, poor management and severe local economic and social deprivation meant that the parks were not completed and work was restricted to incremental improvements, such as the restoration of Chumleigh Gardens in Burgess Park in 1994 and the development of local greens at Mile End Park in the late 1980s.

By the middle of the 1990s most interviewees agreed that both parks were in a poor condition, visually uninteresting, under used and havens for anti-social behaviour – a far cry from their original aspirations.

The history of the two case study parks has had a number of important implications shown in table 3:



Dimension	Implication
Physical	The incremental and discontinuous nature of the parks' development meant that neither had been considered as a whole in landscape terms. This led to a 'lack of coherence and design identity' (Bellamy 1981: p254). This reflects a wider challenge that Burgess and Mile End did not correspond with the traditional (essentially Victorian) view of park design in the UK (Worpole 2001).
	The parks' development was largely a result of opportunistic land acquisition. This left them divided by roads, railway embankments and buildings and with ill-defined perimeters with some poorly overlooked and connected spaces, edges and corners.
	As a space was cleared, it was planted and designed to serve the needs of the immediate residential community with priority given to children's play and small gardens. Some of this legacy was still in evidence in the mid-1990s and some remains to this day.
	The ongoing challenges, especially for tree health, of designing, landscaping and maintaining a site built over the foundations of older buildings.
Social	Because of the length of time taken to clear the land, local communities suffered from the blight of abandoned buildings and poorly formed plots of open space. This exacerbated local deprivation, allowed for ongoing anti-social behaviour and prevented a long-term culture of use to develop.
	Both parks were developed as relatively long and narrow spaces, which has meant that both have a very long perimeter relative to their area. Therefore there are more interactions with surrounding users to manage, a longer border to police (Worpole 2001) and less opportunity to create a sense of escape or distance from built up areas. This is especially important for Mile End Park, which is only 150 metres wide in places.
	The fact that each park was transferred, over a period of twenty years, between three different statutory bodies meant that there was a lack of sense of ownership and continuity for staff and politicians

Table 3: Implications resulting from the history of Mile End and Burgess Parks

## 4.2 Mile End Park

### 4.2.1 Introduction

Mile End Park is a narrow sliver of 30 hectares of open land that was cleared between Limehouse Basin and Victoria Park and designated as a metropolitan park (GLA 2004). To the east busy retail and residential streets define the park edge. The Regents Canal and a string of converted warehouses, new residential developments and the rapidly expanding Queen Mary College Campus bound it to the west. The park is divided into several sections by two railway viaducts and three major roads. The recent history is described in figure 8.

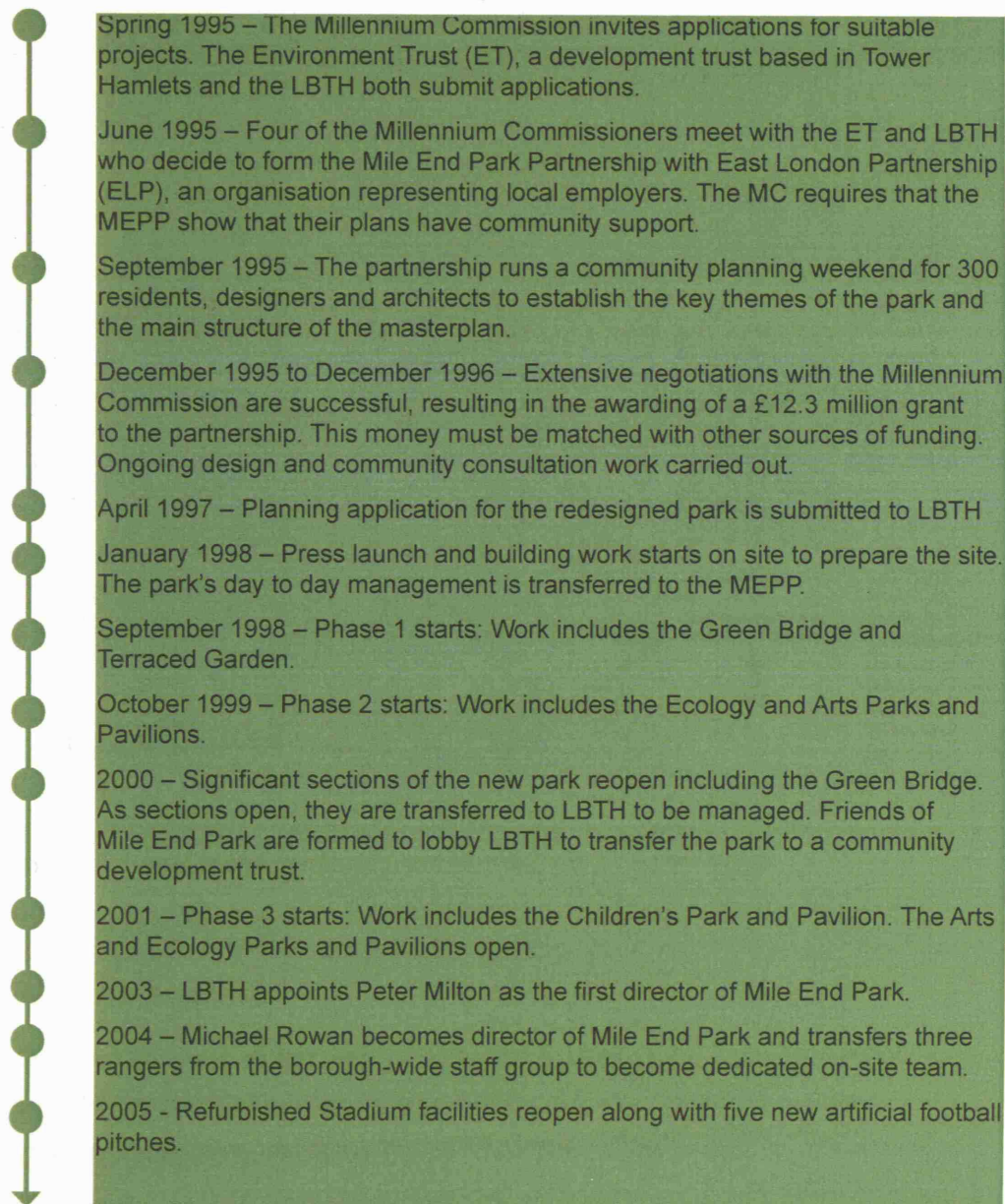


Figure 8: Timeline 1995-2005



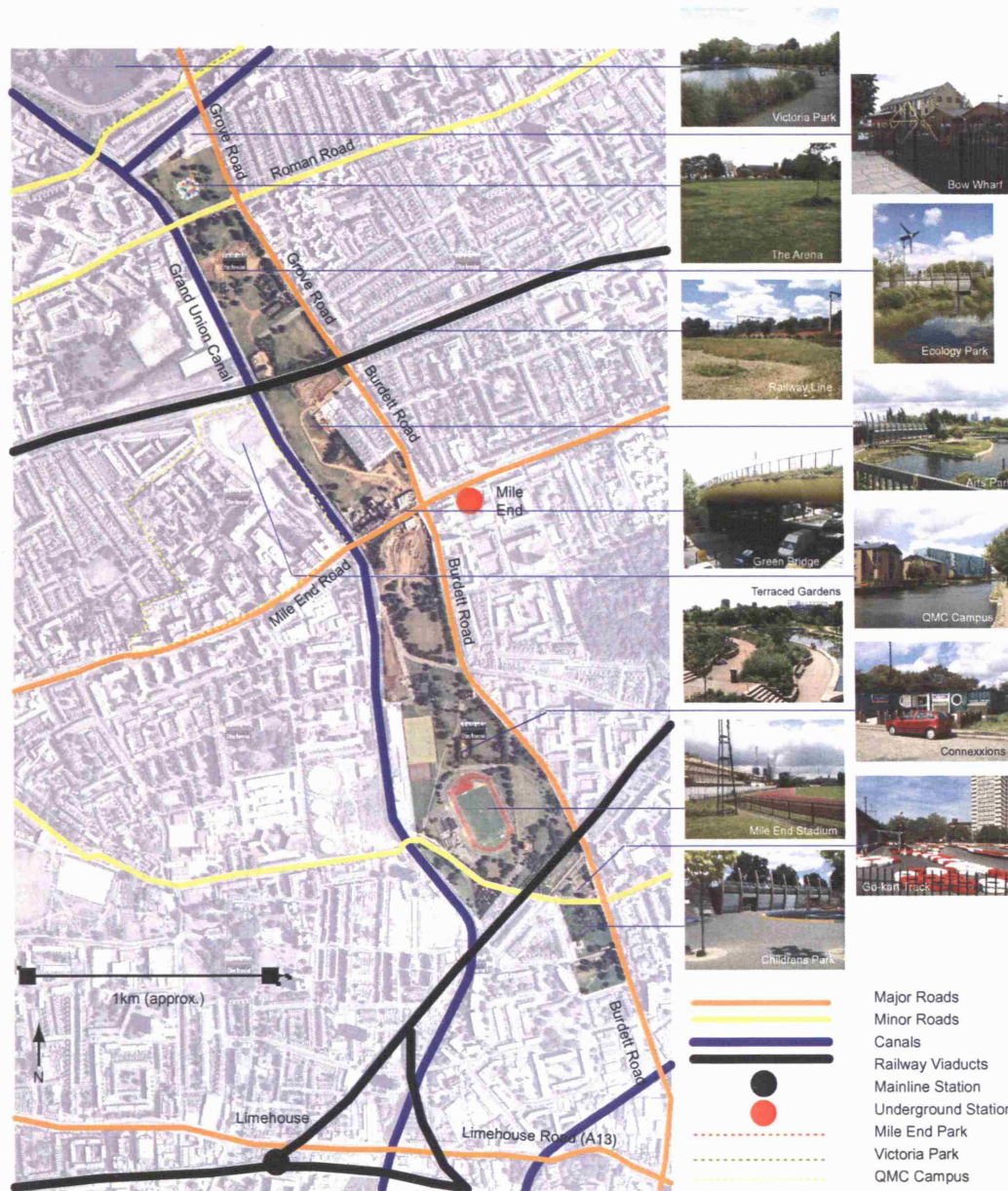


Figure 9: Relationship of park to key routes and thumbnail images showing important components. The park is well connected, but also divided, by many routes

#### 4.2.2 Assessment

Mile End Park won its first Green Flag Award<sup>3</sup> in 2004. Judges comment that 'this is a Park demonstrating lots of good practice' (2004: p1) and praised the current director for the way it was being managed. The park has been widely held up as an example of 'best practice' in both government publications and trade press. CABA Space has been a particular champion, featuring Mile End Park as a major case study for management (2005d)

<sup>3</sup> Green Flags are awarded to those Local Authority parks considered to be excellently managed. The scheme is run by the Civic Trust.

and economic regeneration (2005a). The park has also been mentioned as a good example of private sector involvement in parks (Urban Green Spaces Taskforce 2002) education and training (GLA 2003) and environmental stewardship and awareness building (TCPA 2004). The trade press has praised the innovative new buildings (Worpole 2005) and the Green Bridge (Fieldhouse 2000, Lyall 2001). The following table summarises an in-depth assessment of Mile End Park undertaken using the methodology developed in the literature review. The full assessment is in Appendix E.

Dimension	Performance	Commentary
Social	Average	The park is relatively well-used for many different activities by a wide range of visitors. The park has little crime and feels relatively safe. However many areas and buildings remain under used. There is greater scope for development of ongoing health and education programmes in the park.
Economic	Good	The redevelopment of the park has helped improve the image of the area and its attractiveness for inward investment. A number of new residential developments and successful businesses have been created as a result.
Environmental	Very good	The park has a wide range of habitats and flora and fauna. Design features reduce natural resources used.
<b>Overall</b>	<b>Good</b>	

Table 4: Assessment of Mile End Park

### 4.2.3 Key Success Factors

#### *Location*

The park is surrounded by diverse communities. This helps to ensure that it is used by a range of people in a range of ways throughout the day. Employment growth at Canary Wharf, the gentrification of Bow and Mile End and the growth of the student population has changed the demographic of people using the park and increased community involvement and corporate financial support. The presence of deprived groups has



Figure 10: The canal tow path provides both regional and local connections and is well used by pedestrians, cyclists and joggers

resulted in some anti-social behaviour.

#### *Local connections*

The park is bordered by a popular canal towpath to the west and by major roads on all other sides. This means that it is relatively accessible and visible from busy roads – increasing overlooking and generating through traffic. The southern half of the park is better used because of more direct connections with adjacent streets, more visibly permeable boundary and a direct route across the canal.

#### *Regional connections*

Mile End Park is very well connected sub-regionally by Mile End tube station, eight direct daytime bus routes, the A11 and A1205, as well as the canal towpath. This facilitates a wider catchment for activities – especially those with a more specific appeal such as the climbing wall and the stadium.

#### *Key individuals*

During the development phase Jon Aldenton, Director of the Environment Trust, was the critical actor. Interviewees noted his drive, tenacity, charisma and good contacts. He was supported by a talented multi-disciplinary professional team, which was involved continuously from the start and was willing to make a substantial commitment to the project.

Between the completion of reconstruction work and the appointment of the current park director, the park was managed centrally by LBTH staff and contractors. All interviewees agree that this was a problematic period for the park as maintenance, security and programming were poor.

Since the appointment of the latest park director Michael Rowan in 2003, significant improvements have taken place. He describes his management philosophy as 'consensus with direction'. He is an entrepreneurial manager who is capable of gathering a wide range of support behind the park and of grasping available opportunities. He believes that all development in the park should be sustainable – both environmentally and economically. He is supported by a team of four on-site rangers

#### *Stakeholder involvement*

Since the successful MC bid, the development and management of the park is overseen by the MEPP board which consists of two representatives each from ET, LBTH and ELP. During the development phase ET was the dominant partner, providing leadership and strategic development, determining the make-up and structure of the professional team and facilitating community participation.

LBTH was able to provide finances, personnel and democratic accountability, but it took a fairly passive role in driving the development of the park. This caused problems later when the council decided to retain management responsibility rather than transfer the park to a trust. As a result LBTH staff who were to maintain the park had not bought into the design concept and were unprepared for the intense management that it requires. There was some resistance to MEPP's plans from within the council – especially amongst opposition Liberal Democrat councillors.

ELP provided little strategic direction but was important in giving more credibility to the bid. Later on large private sector companies provided significant funds and now participate in team building events. Several local businesses operate concessions within or in units adjacent to the park.

A borough-wide contractor undertakes the bulk of the horticultural maintenance. Several interviewees stated that the contractor was performing, however, their style of working was considered 'insensitive' and requires close supervision.

#### *Community involvement*

The involvement of the community since 1995 has been substantial and influential and by and large successful.

The initial design weekend was attended by 300 local residents who helped establish the basic terms of reference for the park. During development, MEPP spent £800,000 and employed four community liaison officers to involve and communicate with surrounding communities. The themes of play, art, ecology, sport and fun were each adopted by a focus group, consisting of around twenty local people who met every two months to 'formally advise the partnership on development of the park plan ... the construction programme and working practices for contractors' (Environment Trust 1997: p3-4). Focus group members were self-selecting, so the partnership also used outreach, a large number of public events, feedback and questionnaires to contact hard-to-reach individuals. In total thirty-five major design changes resulted from this work (Environment Trust 1997, 1998). Andy Lyon, chair of the Friends, felt that focus groups were generally effective and that the community 'got the park they wanted'. Some interviewees felt that there was too much consultation which slowed redevelopment become parochial at times.

The Friends of Mile End Park were set up in 2000 as a response to the perceived lack of commitment by the council towards finding an effective management solution for the park. They quickly grew to 300 paid-up members and successfully campaigned for the appointment of a park director and for arms-length status. The Friends have an executive committee that meets six times a year and sub-groups that work on specific events and other initiatives. They interface with the Partnership Board and, despite only being observers,



they still influence policy and decision-making. Some interviewees felt that the Friends lack strength, do not protest loudly enough and are too focused on the ecological aspects of the park, but this study did not find any direct evidence for this. The Friends remain unrepresentative of the communities surrounding the park.

Since 2004 four park forums have helped determine policy, run events and give advice to the director. These are themed around arts, play, ecology and safety ('Park Watch').

### *Organisational Structure*

As sections of the park were completed between 2000 and 2002, management of the park was transferred back to LBTH. Although as part of the bid, LBTH had committed to transfer the park to a independent trust, it decided to transfer to a wholly controlled trust as the park was now seen as a key asset.

LBTH eventually appointed a park director to take responsibility for the park. The director is employed by LBTH but reports to the MEPP and the King George Fields, Stepney, Charity Board. The director has far more independence than other parks department managers in the borough. He is clearly responsible for the park (which builds accountability) and is able to make decisions rapidly and efficiently (which enables entrepreneurial approaches to be taken). This role helps ensure that the park has an advocate, however there are no support staff other than the rangers.

The most important action undertaken by the director was to transfer three rangers from the borough-wide mobile patrol unit to a dedicated on-site team in 2004. The rangers have a broad role that encompasses horticultural maintenance, building and events management, park policing and interpretation and education. This service is popular and successful with local people who feel it makes the park feel safer, and have built up relations with the rangers. Their shift pattern ensures that there is a constant daytime presence in the park.

### *Landscape Design*

The master plan is based on the vision of 'the park for the 21<sup>st</sup> century', contrasting strongly with Victoria Park to the north. Traditional elements of park design have been updated and reinvented.

The key themes of play, sport, fun, arts and ecology are manifested in a series of separate areas, landscapes and buildings, exploiting the divided nature of the park. The zones' different characters are emphasised through the placement of different uses, spaces of varied shapes and sizes and different planting styles, topography and enclosure. The choice of themes is an effective way of including different interest groups that have come into conflict over the development of parks elsewhere (Worpole and Greenhalgh 1995). However the spatial segregation of themes has caused problems for both users and management. For

*Figure 11: The promenade has become a meandering 'spinal path' with segregated tracks for cyclists and pedestrians. Swings and slides are now complemented by interactive and creative play equipment including a rock wall, a cable slide and climbing nets. The traditional duck pond has been replaced by a number of water features including the naturalistic ecology lake and the formal stepped water feature and fountain in the Terraced Gardens. (Image: Sublime Photography)*

example, should only art be shown in the Arts Park and other activities such as sports and play be discouraged?

The diversity of spaces means that users can discover different sensory experiences and can find an appropriate space for contemplation, meeting friends, courting, sport and play in both formal and informal settings. However this diversity also overwhelms the intended unifying elements of the park – the spinal path, the buildings and the monolithic entrance signs. Each space remains perceptually and visually separated – reflected in parochial patterns of use.

The Green Bridge has become an icon for the park and the wider regeneration in the East End. It is the element of the park that is most often cited by the press. Titles include 'The other Millennium Bridge – a true example of community support (Morrison 2000), 'Why did the park cross the road?' (Rattray 2000) and 'Green bridge illuminates urban wasteland' (Vidal 2000). The Green Bridge physically and symbolically binds together the north and south halves of the park by providing a striking continuous green route, complete with trees,



*Figure 12: The introduction of a dynamic topography and the route of the Spinal Path help create stunning vistas – especially of Canary Wharf. The topography also helps to create enclosure and separation from noise and activity.*



*Figure 13: The Green Bridge was built to 'beat the road' and make it easier for people to move from the north to the south of the park although it is arguable how important this function is. However it does form a central hub that visually and perceptually anchors the park, providing valuable income*



*Figure 14: The most frequented space is the Terraced Garden and its surroundings. This is because it is both an attractive place to linger – with formal planting, water features and lots of semi-private nooks to meet friends, but also very accessible (Image: Sublime Photography)*

across the six-lane Mile End Road. It has become an instant local landmark, being one of the highest points in Tower Hamlets and passed by up to 70,000 cars a day. The Green Bridge has also been a good investment in commercial terms. Construction costs totalled £4 million and current valuation of the site is in the order of £5-6 million (interview with Jon Aldenton). The creation of viable and attractive retail uses under the bridge is a highly effective way of ensuring a vibrant and safe street underneath, of diversifying local food offer and provides a major source of income for the park. The tenants were chosen carefully, which delayed leasing the units, but reduced turnover in the long run.

The circulation system works well, with new paths serving desire lines effectively, especially in the area around the Green Bridge and in the South Park. The strongest element remains the canal towpath which is under exploited by the masterplan and remains partially separated from the park by walls, railings or landscaping. The lack of a bridge to link the northern half of the park across the canal is a significant barrier to its use. Lighting is limited to the spinal path, which leads to poor nocturnal use.

The introduction of three earth-covered pavilions was another way generating interest, use and revenue from the park. This has been far less successful due problems with both the design and management of these spaces. When closed, these shuttered buildings blight the spaces around them and many interviewees view them as an expensive mistake.

Other weaknesses of the masterplan include:



*Figure 15: The pavilions are striking set pieces when viewed from inside the park, their wide organic curves and sweeping balustrades attractively integrated into the mounded topography and water features. The buildings themselves are striking pieces of architecture, but have poor acoustics and lack catering facilities which makes them hard to let. The orientation of the buildings – although important for passive solar gain – does not relate effectively with the main entrances at the back of the buildings. The original entrances at the ends of each building have become places where groups of youths congregate and have been vandalised on a number of occasions*

- Failure to address existing isolated buildings and sections of terraces, leaving exposed backs, poorly overlooked spaces and little-used corners.
- Poor integration of the stadium, which creates a major barrier to movement between the southern and northern sections.
- For a site that has seen so much change throughout the last two hundred years, the designers have totally ignored this opportunity to incorporate any references to the past in their design.
- Inconsistent boundary treatment with some areas totally open to adjacent roads and paths, while other consist of walls or railings.

#### *Complementary Mix of Uses*

The variety of spaces and attractions helps to attract diverse groups of people and reinforces other activities to create a vibrant and safer place. This includes shops, cafes and concessions run by private companies in the park. The viability of these businesses is important to the success of the park, either directly (through a profit-sharing agreement such as that for Revolution Go-karts) or indirectly by providing a valuable service which adds to the draw of the park (such as the Roaster's café under the Green Bridge). The uses in the railway arches and the Green Bridge are controlled by LBTH and the park management to ensure that tenants complement and contribute towards a successful public space. The community warden dog service has agreed to provide patrols in return for the use of a building in the park at reduced rent.



*Figure 16: Remaining buildings can create hidden areas which are poorly overlooked and can become areas prone to anti-social behaviour such as flytipping.*



*Figure 17: The park provides a space for the exercising of police horses. This also helps make the place feel safer at no cost to the park.*



*Figure 18: The Connexions Centre is based in former freight containers. This has a role in helping with job finding, general advice and support within a 'one stop shop for youth' targeting 11-19 year olds and will be complemented this year by an Adventure playground. According to the park director, there were 850 visitors to the centre between July 2004 and March 2005 (only around 6 per day).*



The infrastructure for children has been particularly carefully planned with separate areas for toddlers, 3-10 year-olds and 11-19 year-olds. The inclusion of a creche for children, training room for parents and child psychologist in the Children's Pavilion is a good example of complementary uses. The Connexions Centre adjacent to a planned adventure playground and Extreme sports (a BMX track) next to Concordia (a recording studio project), are other good examples.

The park suffers from specific deficiencies such as public toilets and a café, both of which are important in attracting and keeping visitors.

### *Programming*

The increased emphasis that the director has placed on events and programming is starting result in greater use by a wider community. In 2004, events such as the Greenwich and Docklands Festival, the Town and Village fair, a music festival and more recently Get Moving (run by the Friends) successfully attracted several thousand visitors from a range of communities. An annual Fun

Fair was reinstated in 2004 after gang violence caused its closure in 2000. Arts events include Artsparkle (1998) and Sculpture in the Park (2001) which were both successful (Thackara 2002). The director has instigated a range of successful ecology events including nature walks. By changing the location of major events the park each year he has ensured that all communities feel included and people discover different areas of the park.

Figure 19: The Park It! festival 2005 (image: Friends of Mile End Park)

### *Capital Funding*

£22 million of capital investment in the park between 1996 and 2002 allowed for a relatively quick transformation and the development of a unified design. Those interviewed did not agree on why the bid had been successful. Although the MC were keen to release grant funding, matched funding had to be sourced. MEPP convinced the investors in the Bow Wharf Leisure Development to state to the Commission that they wouldn't invest in an adjacent site unless the park's redevelopment went ahead. Once accepted as legitimate matched funds, the project was underway and MEPP was then able to attract significant other sources of funding, as shown in Appendix F.

The fragmented structure and uncertain timing of the funding meant that greater costs were incurred due to lower economies of scale and significant resources being spent finding matched funds<sup>4</sup>. The priorities and timescales of funders drove the phasing of the development and led to many design changes.

<sup>4</sup> Brian Cheetham estimated this in the region of £3 million

Several interviewees bemoaned the fact that despite the £22 million investment, this was insufficient to complete all the planned projects. No money was retained to rectify teething problems and as a result the current park requires many small alterations requiring time-consuming funding applications. The investment appears also uneven, with some spaces such as the Arts and Ecology Parks clearly having benefited from significant investment while other areas appear unchanged.



Figure 20: The Arena space - one of many areas in the park that seems to have changed little since before the MC bid.

#### *Revenue Funding*

Approximately sixty per cent of the park's revenue costs of £650,000 are met through independent and secure sources – mainly on-site assets under the Green Bridge and other concessions. This income is ring-fenced within the park. The council has maintained the park's grant in real terms despite cuts elsewhere in the Environment and Leisure Department. These factors have enabled the park director to plan ahead with some certainty. He acknowledges that this revenue is insufficient to manage the park in the way envisaged by the bid team (with up to thirty on-site rangers). The key variance between existing and planned income is the lack of an endowment fund (Aldenton and Hart 2001) and the lengthy process of leasing commercial units.

## 4.3 Burgess Park

*'No one, anywhere in the world, has ever bulldozed the urban landscape on such a scale before, just to produce a piece of open space'*

*Hunter Davies (1983: p199).*

### 4.3.1 Introduction

Burgess Park is an elongated triangle of 50 hectares of open space sandwiched between the Aylesbury Estate to the north and the North Peckham Estate to the south. It has major entrances on the Old Kent Road and Camberwell Road. Fine Georgian terraces make up three conservation areas east and west of the park. It remains divided by a number of busy and disused roads. Key features are shown in figure 21.

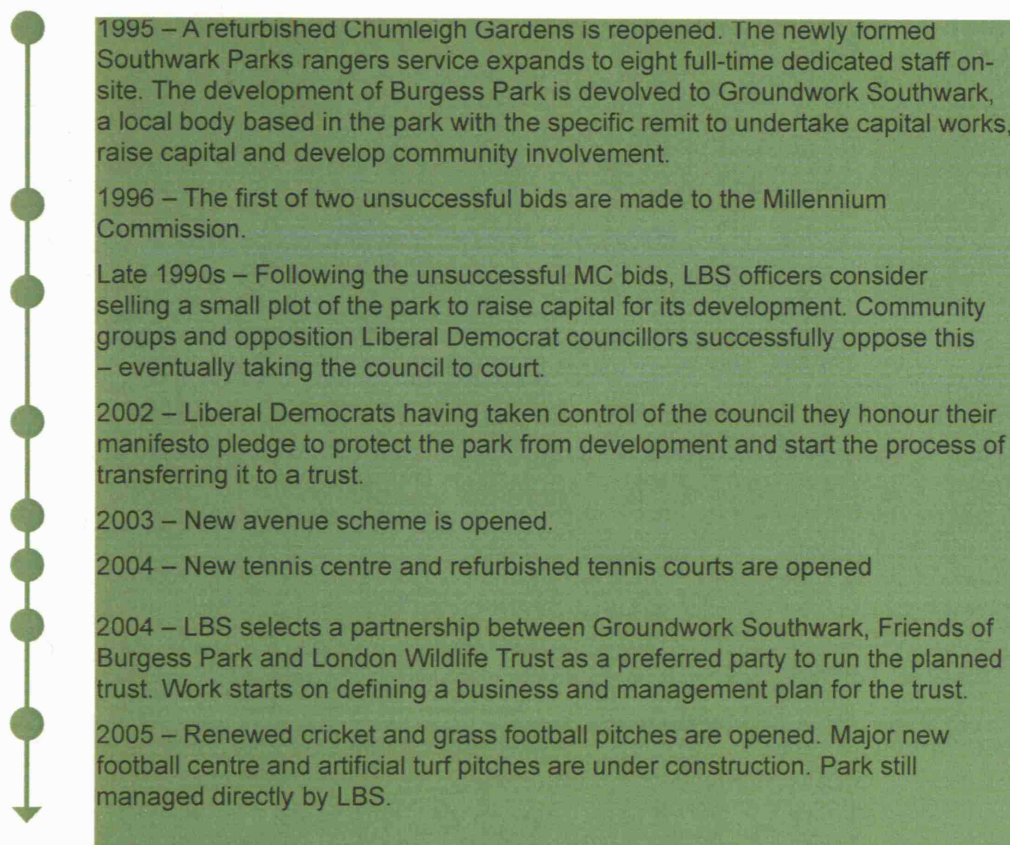


Figure 21: Timeline 1995-2005



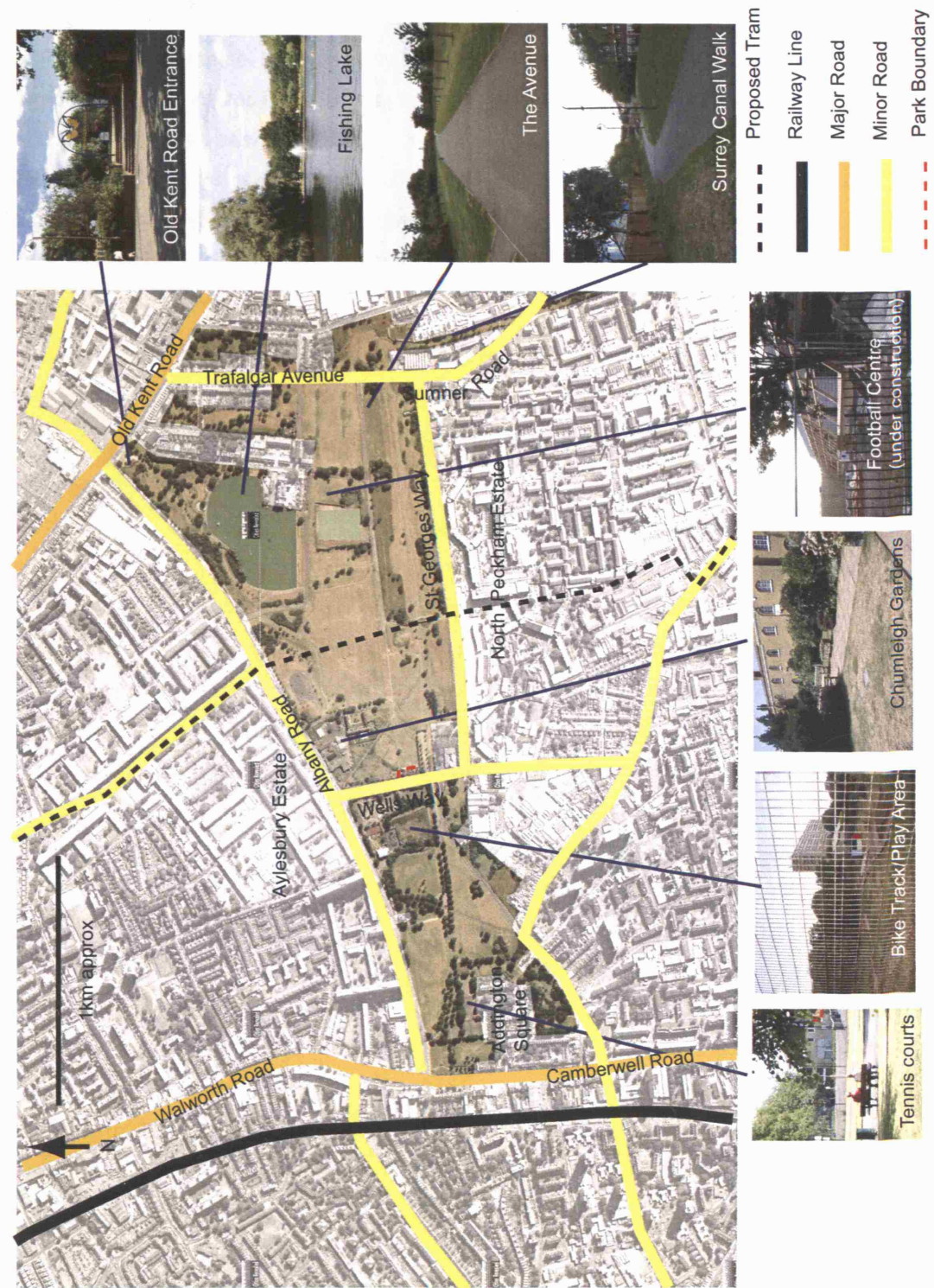


Figure 22: Burgess Park shown with key routes and the main elements of the current space.

### 4.3.2 Assessment

Burgess Park has not been formally assessed for its quality. In fact a literature review demonstrated the impression that this park has failed to register amongst commentators or critics. The park has been criticised for its lack of identity and overall purpose (Percifull and Thomas 1993), under use (Smyth 1987), and for being bland and featureless. In 2002, a conference was held to debate the future of Burgess Park. Its conclusions were that Burgess Park is generally under performing and does not operate at a metropolitan scale despite its size (Groundwork 2002).

The following table 5 summarises an in-depth assessment of Burgess Park undertaken using the developed in the literature review which can be found in Appendix G.

Dimension	Performance	Commentary
Social	Average	The park is under used during the week but well used for sports at weekends. A significant proportion of local people perceives the park as dangerous. It does not meet its potential as a regional park. It is little used to improve wider social goals such as skills and health.
Economic	Average	The park is seen as one of the assets for new developments in the area. However Burgess Park is too poorly known to have a substantial impact on the area's image. The park has almost no interaction with businesses and the existing café and conference facilities are under performing.
Environmental	Average	Biodiversity in the park has recently improved due to more tailored management. Some of the new park buildings are designed to minimise energy consumption.
<b>Overall</b>	<b>Average</b>	

Table 5: Assessment of Burgess Park

### 4.2.3 Key Success Factors

#### *Location*

Burgess Park has been situated in an area that has experienced extreme and devastating physical and social challenges over the past fifty years. The demolition of thousands of Victorian terraces to create the massive Aylesbury and North Peckham estates were followed by the demolition and rebuilding of much of the latter and uncertainty regarding the potential



redevelopment of the former. This history has been one of community disenfranchisement and lack of consultation (Bellamy 1981 and Vassie 2001).

Several interviewees emphasised its value as the only large open space in the area. Others, however pointed to how little known and used the park was – even by people living locally



Figure 19: The distinctive megastructures of the Aylesbury Estate line the northern boundary of the park.

#### *Local Connections*

The park is lined on all sides by roads. However links to major routes are poor and the park is easy to miss. Many of the entrances are uninviting, poorly located, with poor signage. Heavy traffic along Albany Road and Camberwell Road create severance. The Avenue is the key route through the park – the avenue – but has relatively poor links with surrounding areas.

#### *Regional Connections*

Burgess Park is fairly well connected sub-regionally to the bus network, with two routes running through the park and another thirteen stopping nearby. However the nearest tube or train station is 20 minutes' walk.

#### *Key Individuals*

A range of people from LBS, GS and the Friends has been committed to developing and improving the park. However no single individual has emerged who has been able to garner the necessary ongoing support from local politicians and other stakeholders or build a stable team with the necessary mix of skills to deliver consistent improvement.

This is partly a factor of changing management structures and the lack of effective partnership working (see below). There has also been a significant turnover of staff both in LBS parks department and also at GS.

#### *Stakeholder Involvement*

Responsibility for the development and management of the park lies with LBS. Since 1995 GS have been the council's preferred development partner, raising funds and managing the delivery of projects.

The council's attitude towards the park has changed considerably over time due to changes in the political climate. Interviewees acknowledged that Burgess Park was used



as a political football between the two major parties in Southwark. After the failed MC bids, officers at LBS explored the possibility of selling a plot of land within the park in order to raise funds for the park's development. This was opposed by community groups and the (then) opposition Liberal Democrat group who used the protection of the park as a key manifesto pledge in the subsequent manifesto pledge. When they took control of the council they chose a consortium of GS, Friends of Burgess Park and London Wildlife Trust as its preferred partner to transfer the park to a trust. Ongoing difficulties in the relationship between LBS and the parties mean that the transfer is unlikely to take place in the near future. It is not clear whether the preferred partners have the track record or the access to funds required to successfully manage the park.

Involvement of the private sector is predominantly as a grounds maintenance contractor to the council, which is performing relatively highly against contractual performance indicators. Other private sector involvement is limited to approximately ten corporate team-building events held each year in the park.

### *Community Involvement*

In 1995 Groundwork Southwark set up the Burgess Park Committee, which has enabled local people to get involved and express their views on the state and future development of the park. This group also took part in the MC bids. The committee became the Friends of Burgess Park in order to widen its membership. Outreach work by the current chair of the Friends has resulted in 162 affiliate members and 480 ordinary members – although there is no membership fee. Its activity depends on the commitment of a few individuals, but the Friends include representatives from many of the communities that surround the park.

The Friends hold a number of meetings each year which are open to everyone. Limited resources have prevented them holding public events to publicise their work and as a result they have a low profile locally. There have been attempts to involve local people in the future of the park run by Groundwork (2000) and Womens Design Service (2005). These highlighted important but relatively parochial issues such as dog fouling and lack of play space.

The failed land sale eroded trust between the community and the Council. Many of those who lost their homes or workplaces to make room for the park live locally and argued that it is wrong for any part of the park to be sold and developed. Others were concerned that proceeds would not be ploughed back into the park. Interviewees have described the relationship between the Council and the Friends as 'prickly' and 'difficult' despite being widely consulted on changes to the park. The lack of trust between the community groups and the council has been an important factor preventing different stakeholders in the park working together effectively and constructively especially on the plans for the trust. The plan to transfer the management of Burgess Park to a trust is part of a laudable attempt on the

part of the Council to increase community involvement in strategic management after many years where community involvement was sporadic and tactical.

### *Organisational Structures*

The Southwark Parks Department has undergone a number of reorganisations in recent years. A sixty-strong rangers service was established in 1994. The role of each ranger was to be 'a mix of social worker, teacher, environmentalist and interpreter' (Barrie 1997: p22). This service attracted skilled workers who undertook a wide range of outreach and events management, gained Southwark a good reputation nationally for parks management. A restructure in 2001 was followed by the abandonment of the ranger service in 2003 following a Best Value Review.

The current structure of the Parks Department is on a area basis. The role of the north-west Southwark parks manager covers Burgess Park and a large number of other open spaces in the borough. This role has minimal freedom to make investment or strategic decisions about the future of the park, but is primarily concerned with day to day management.

The newly formed Community Warden Service has taken on enforcement functions with seed funding from ODPM. On a typical day, two wardens patrol all the green spaces in the area, resulting in a sporadic official presence in the park – a factor identified as a barrier to use.

Several interviewees recognised that, in general, local authority management lacked the entrepreneurial culture or quick decision-making ability to capitalise on existing assets or opportunities when they arise. Decision-making occurs through a strict hierarchy and ultimately by committee with the consequential delay between the formulation and implementation of an idea.

The changing structure of LBS Parks Department, the involvement of Groundwork Southwark and the potential transfer to a trust has resulted in a lack of clarity over who should drive forward the vision for the park. During interviews, it emerged that the park was being developed in an incremental and opportunistic manner based on available capital funding. There



*Figure 23: More sensitive management has led to increases in wildflowers. The Old Library in the background is now Groundwork Southwark's Offices*

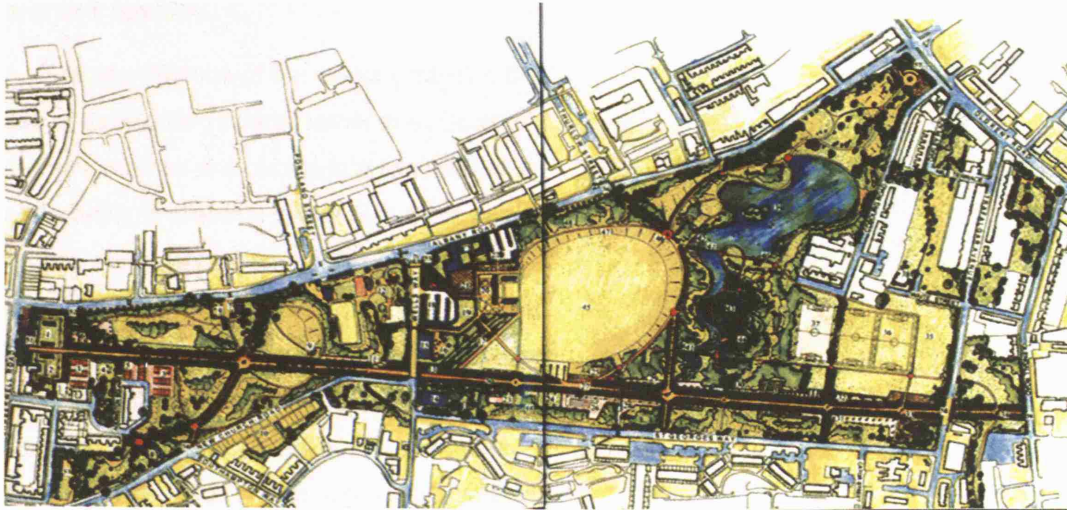


Figure 24: The 1996 EDAW masterplan shows a number of key elements including the major arena space surrounded by raised banks for viewing, enhanced sports facilities, enhanced and softened water features based around the existing lake, a number of play areas distributed throughout the park, improved boundaries and a series of themed gardens along the canal route reflecting the area's industrial heritage (EDAW 1996).

is no existing management or business plan for Burgess park, which makes it hard for those working there to be held accountable and for long-term planning to take place.

#### *Landscape Design*

At least five different master plans have been adopted for the site, none of which have been completed. The latest is the EDAW master plan from 1996 (GS 1996), which was updated in 2001 and has provided a basic plan from which projects are incrementally developed.

Currently the park is a series of open areas of grass scattered with trees and divided by closed-off roads, railings, chain-link fences and other earlier interventions. In general the park's design lacks visual or sensory stimulation – it appears that ease of maintenance has been the over-riding priority.

The structure of the park is dominated and united by the Avenue and linear tree planting. Otherwise, the circulation system is poor, with a lack of choice of routes or interesting views



Figure 25: The Avenue was built along the alignment of the Surry Canal and is the key route through the park.



Figure 26: The large central space is used for football during the weekend.



and poor legibility.

The construction of the tennis centre on the site of the existing courts, rather than close to the new football and cricket facilities missed an opportunity to create a sports hub in the park and reduce management costs. The current layout of spaces and activities does little to overcome the division of the park by Wells Way, Trafalgar Avenue, Coburg Road and other built up spaces. There are number of different levels and mounds, which create some visual interest and increase the perceived size of the park.

Although there are attractive areas where wildflowers grow in abundance, the planting is uninspired, and mostly consists of grass and deciduous trees and no formally planted spaces. Dense and impenetrable boundary planting, for example at the Old Kent Road entrance, does not create a positive sense of welcome for visitors and passers-by.

The Park includes a large lake which is popular with anglers and those looking for a picnic spot

#### *Complementary Mix of Uses*

Most interviewees felt that the park lacked attractions that would enable it to fulfil its regional role. Whilst incorporating more sports infrastructure, the park still lacks facilities aimed specifically at women, older people and children. Current uses are segregated spatially and perceptually from each other. For example, the café at Chumleigh Gardens suffers from being isolated from play and sports facilities and vice versa. Other generators of activity such as Coburg Primary School, the Wickway Community Centre, the Adventure Play Area (which includes a bike track and go-kart track) are not integrated physically or organisationally into the park. A particular deficiency of the park is

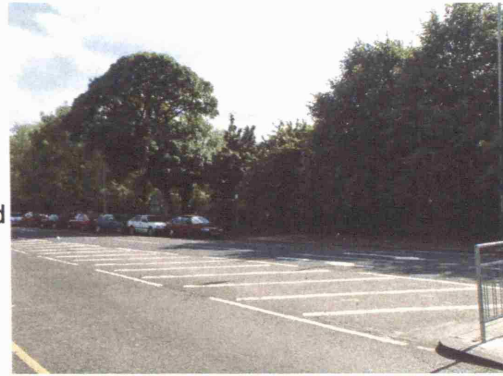


Figure 26: Heavy boundary planting in certain areas makes the park less inviting. Wells Way shown here is the major road dividing the site.



Figure 27: The park provides a welcome relief during hot weather.



Figure 28: Some areas of the park are separated from each other by secure fencing. The BMX track is shown here.

the lack of accessible toilets.

### *Programming*

There are a number of major events which use the scale of the park to good effect – often attracting several thousand people from all over London. Events in the park include a regular summer festival – often including Latin American Afro-Caribbean and Irish events and in 2005 a London-wide anti-racism music festival called Rise. These are free events which often attract large crowds. The Friends have recently organised a successful sports event for disabled children from seven London Boroughs. There are also a number of organised football, rugby and tennis events, arts-based events and health events at Chumleigh Gardens. There is a lack of marketing of the park and activities especially for small scale events. A complete list of events is in Appendix H.

*Figure 29: The Carnival Del Pueblo attracts visitors from across London.*

### *Capital Funding*

Many of the interviewees pointed to the ongoing lack of capital investment as the key factor in Burgess Park's relative failure to reach its potential. Although unsuccessful in the MC bids, GS and LBS have been relatively successful in attracting funding. They have raised approximately £5 million since 1995 for specific projects within the park (see Appendix I). Interviewees recognised that the council has prioritised projects where matched funding was available. While good value for money for taxpayers, investment decisions are dependent on the priorities of uncoordinated and unaccountable external funding bodies<sup>5</sup>, which may not necessarily be in the best interests of the park or its users.


The relatively small amounts of ring-fenced funding raised has been unable to achieve the kind of transformation that a larger all-encompassing sum would have achieved. Many projects such as the removal of the roads are unlikely to be carried out under current funding arrangements<sup>6</sup>.

### *Revenue Funding*

The park's annual running costs are approximately £700,000, of which between £200,000 and £250,000 are spent on general maintenance, the remainder on directly employed staff and other expenditure. Interviewees stated that this has remained relatively stable over recent years. The park generates an income equivalent to around five per cent of

<sup>5</sup> Most significant sources of capital (mostly related to the National Lottery) are only willing to fund certain types of project such as heritage, sport or football. Because large funds for parks improvements are no longer available.

<sup>6</sup> A recent bid to English Partnerships for £1.6 million to remove the roads was unsuccessful as it was deemed to be of insufficient priority.



*Figures 30 and 31: Events and conferences at Chumleigh Gardens provide the only significant independent source of income for the park. (images: Friends of Burgess Park)*

expenditure, mainly through conferences and events at Chumleigh Gardens (interview with John Sheaff). LBS rules dictate that any income raised cannot be retained by the park management.



## 5.0 Comparative Analysis

The following section compares the success factors of the two parks.

### 5.1 Contextual factors: Location and connections

To an extent the success of both parks is a reflection of their surrounding areas. Mile End's recent growth in prosperity and North Peckham's ongoing social problems and large-scale redevelopment are manifested in the quality of their parks. Greater gentrification and stability (at Mile End) have diversified the demographic of users and have helped develop a longer and more positive culture of use.

Both areas are characterised by a mix of different demographic groups. This helps to ensure that the parks are used for a variety of activities at different times of day. Social problems present in deprived social housing estates adjacent to both parks has spilt out into the parks. This issue disproportionately affects Burgess Park as the adjoining estates are larger and have arguably had more problems. However, the presence of social deprivation helps make the parks successful recipients of regeneration funding.

Local connections in the form of busy, legible and direct links contribute towards greater levels of use. People passing through the area will tend to use the park more if it is on a directly accessible from other strategic links. Mile End Park's relative success is partly due to better visibility from adjoining streets and more porous boundaries which enable use and the perception of safety.

Regional connections are important in creating and maintaining a wider catchment and making sub-regional attractions viable. Mile End's tube station and canal towpath can better support facilities such as the climbing wall and stadium.

### 5.2 Human factors: Key actors, stakeholders and the community.

The plight of both parks attracted individuals committed to making them more successful. However the cases demonstrate that without clear leadership, support from local politicians and good teamwork the transformation is unlikely to be successful.

Mile End Park has been more successful in the two periods where there was a clear and effective leader who built a coalition of support and an effective professional team with a good mix of skills over a period of time. In contrast, Burgess Park has suffered from a lack of these factors on a consistent basis.

Positive leadership qualities exhibited include charisma, a clear sense of purpose or vision, commitment to the project and an entrepreneurial approach. This research indicates that an effective leader can become an advocate for a park as well as be accountable for

its performance. The leader needs the support of a team with the appropriate mix of skills. During reconstruction these include community consultation, masterplanning, landscape design, project management, event management and engineering. As for ongoing management, attributes include horticultural, maintenance, event management, ecological and people skills. Another important factor is the continuous involvement of team members over time in order to build trust and a knowledge base.

In both cases, the parks are being developed and managed by a partnership of different organisations, dominated at times by a single partner. This has led to tensions and problems reaching consensus during certain periods. However, the establishment of a formal partnership at Mile End Park that has delivered tangible and significant improvements has contributed towards more successful partnership working. LBS's more informal partnership arrangement and history of unilateral actions has prevented the build up of trust between partners and consensus on the development of the park.

In the case of Mile End, the dominant partner had a strong track record in delivering community-led environmental improvement projects in the local area. This was important in building trust and consensus. The equivalent organisation at Burgess Park is Groundwork Southwark, a less established and a weaker party in the partnership. The amount of human and financial resources committed by the local authority as the body with responsibility for management and maintenance appears to be important and is related to the level of support from senior politicians.

There has been minimal private sector involvement in the strategic direction of both parks, although it could be argued that the ET has an entrepreneurial ethos that is more akin to the private sector. The involvement of large commercial contractors at both parks is seen as a sub-optimal, if cost effective, solution to horticultural maintenance.

Both cases have exposed tensions both within the community and between stakeholders. Strains appear to be inevitable as different interest groups have different priorities. The research shows this can be overcome by building trust and involving stakeholders in a strategic and meaningful way. MEPP was able to build trust by engaging in ongoing dialogue with the community and stakeholders that resulted in demonstrable changes throughout the reconstruction phase. More recently the Friends have essentially been co-opted onto MEPP board ensuring they have an interest and are accountable for building and maintaining good relations with other stakeholders. In contrast, although the Friends of Burgess Park have been consulted on some changes, their direct involvement in strategic matters will only occur upon the establishment of a trust. The cases show that effective community involvement is challenging, costly, time-consuming complex, but that failure to build trust can store up problems for the future.

Interviewees in both cases stated that having a mechanism for local involvement

is insufficient. Park management should reach out to all kinds of groups via a range of channels because many park users such as black and ethnic minority youth are unlikely to attend evening Friends' meetings. Mile End Park shows how subject based Forums are a powerful idea that can harness community expertise and creativity in a way that supports the park without draining its resources.

Both parks have been managed through a variety of different organisational arrangements driven by changes in policy, funding and priorities at local, regional and national levels. Both cases show that the restructuring of parks management functions have been disruptive in the short term. In both cases interviewees criticised the quality of management during periods when the parks were managed centrally by the Local Authority and stated that they became more successful when they benefited from dedicated on-site management and resources. This is because the management could be tailored and committed to the particular needs of the parks and surrounding communities. It has allowed park workers to build relationships with park users and provided greater accountability between the two groups. The cases also show that the park-level director role is critical. In contrast to the Burgess Park manager, Michael Rowan has sufficient decision-making and financial independence to run Mile End Park more effectively. In general local authority organisational culture and committee based decision making was criticised as being too slow and lacking in entrepreneurial ambition.

Park ranger style roles have proved popular and successful. These roles provide interpretative, maintenance, security, horticultural and event management functions. The cases show that it is important that there are resources available and ear-marked for the organisation, promotion and management of programmes of events. There is evidence that users prefer to see an official presence in the park. Evidence from Mile End Park shows that work patterns for contractors and rangers should match the periods of use by the public.

### **5.3 Planning and Design Factors**

The cases demonstrate that good design can still be an important factor in a park's success. The designs of the spaces at Mile End have managed better to address the diverse interests of local and regional users. The design is relatively legible and easy to move around with a circulation system that offers choice and direct routes. Each space has a distinct character with planting, topography, water features, furniture and surface treatments combining well in each case. This has also developed a diverse range of habitats thereby increasing biodiversity. The iconic Green Bridge has also been an important symbolic and financial success factor. In contrast Burgess Park performs relatively poorly against each of these criteria.

The design of both parks has been unsuccessful at overcoming the major challenges of fragmentation, poor boundaries and long and narrow sites. Neither park reads as a single

entity, but rather as a series of segregated and at times, unrelated spaces. The designs of both display little or no reference to heritage and fail to address the surrounding buildings effectively.

The research shows the importance of design and management such that different activities complement one another. There is evidence that the following facilities are more successful:

- Varied infrastructure catering for all segments the community
- Proximity of facilities which support each other's viability
- Provision of basic facilities for park-users, such as toilets, shelters, seating and refreshments
- Organisation of activities whose objectives are aligned with that of the park e.g. Nature walks
- Ability of the park management to influence the way in which concessions or property in the park is used

Both case study parks are venues for a significant number of events. However neither has an integrated and well-publicised programme that is integrated with the provision of wider social development services.

## 5.4 Funding

The unfinished nature of these parks and huge cumulative under investment has led to a critical need for capital funding. However, a marked disparity in expenditure (Mile End Park received £730,000 per hectare and Burgess Park £100,000 per hectare) over the past ten years has been reflected to an extent in their relative success and the ability to make physical improvements and build an asset base.

The structure of the funding regimes has had a important impact on the development of the parks. In both cases most capital funding had to be matched by money from other sources. MEPP were able to use a wider definition of what could be considered as matched, but in both cases considerable managerial resources were expended in pulling together money from a range of different sources. The resulting uncertainty has led to difficulties in forward planning and numerous design changes.

The grant received by Mile End Park could be used for a general improvement and the development of the park as a holistic space. In contrast, the capital money at Burgess Park has been for specific projects, because the structure of available funding<sup>5</sup>. Burgess Park's managers are limited to undertaking projects in a opportunistic and essentially uncoordinated fashion. This fails to result in the overall step change improvement that is required.

The amount and structure of revenue funding determines how park managers can maintain and improve the fabric of their spaces, run events and provide security. MEPP spends around £22,000 per hectare while LBS spends around £14,000 on Burgess Park.

This is substantially lower than almost £30,000 per hectare spent by the Royal Parks on Regents Park or Greenwich Park. Mile End's higher costs are partly related to the greater expenditure inherent in managing a more complex landscape design.

However, the source of the revenue is also important. In the case of Mile End, substantial independent income from the park means that revenue funding is less dependent on the political priorities of the council. At Burgess Park, the fact that income generated is not directly reinvested means that managers are less incentivised to make better use of existing assets.

## 6.0 Conclusions

From the analysis, it is clear that the Forshaw and Abercrombie parks share a distinctive and difficult history. The nature of their incremental and incomplete development over a fifty-year period has left lasting legacies that fundamentally affect the success of these spaces today. Managers and designers have struggled – and arguably failed - to overcome the challenges of their divisions, fragmented edges, and long and narrow shapes. The long development period has undoubtedly blighted local populations and prevented the development of a long-term culture of use and respect.

However the research shows that the parks now operate in distinct ways. Mile End Park is the more successful space, with a positive social, economic and environmental impact on the wider community. Burgess Park is under performing on several measures despite some recent improvements and is yet to become a significant asset for the local or wider community.

Many of the differences in outcome between the case study parks can be attributed to different patterns of development:

Mile End Park has experienced a virtuous circle of factors that have driven its success. A well-led group of passionate, committed and well-connected individuals, attracted funding, which enabled development of a high quality, attracting more users, making the park feel safer, bringing in more users, funding and involvement. Enabling factors have included a supportive political climate and a relatively independent organisational structure.

Burgess Park has been unable to make the step change despite significant funding. Its development has been characterised by considerable uncertainty, lack of accountability, obfuscatory organisational structures, poor partnership working and lack of vision. Together with the unstructured and fragmented nature of the funding regime these factors have frustrated attempts to generate significant improvements.

This thesis has shown that the two case study parks share a unique history and a troubled period of gestation. Therefore direct transfer of conclusions from this study to other parks of other scales, in other locations should undertaken with caution. The key factors that drive the success of these parks are shown in table 6 below:

Key success factors
Strong and ongoing commitment from key individuals who are willing and able to lead a multi-disciplinary team.
Stakeholder involvement that is based on partnership and consensus building. This must include ongoing political support from governing authority. Parks can benefit from private enterprise especially if their objectives are aligned.
Active participation by local people. This can create commitment to the process of change, call managers to account, build trust and provide expertise and volunteers.



Key success factors
Effective institutional context that devolves decision-making to the appropriate level and allows for some decision-making and financial independence at a park scale whilst providing for long-term stability and planning.
Good landscape design can better integrate the park into its surroundings, increase use and raise the aspirations of its users. An iconic (and perhaps architectural) gesture can be successful in creating both a focal point for the park and a symbol of wider regeneration
Complementary mix of uses within the park that are reinforcing and provide for choice and inclusion.
A diverse range of well-publicised and well-managed events and ongoing arts, cultural, play, sports, health, training and educational programmes.
Significant capital investment available to improved the park as a holistic space in addition to that earmarked for specific projects.
A secure source of ring-fenced funding that allows for long-term planning. This can include an asset-base in or adjacent to the park.

As this research has shown, it is hard to separate out the factors that relate directly to the park itself, and those relating to the wider locality. The success of Mile End Park has undoubtedly been influenced by its relatively good connectivity and the wider gentrification that has occurred in East London. Burgess Park has been disadvantaged by comparison by being relatively poorly connected and having experienced far greater levels of social upheaval during its existence. There are many other external factors such as the influence of institutional frameworks and other regeneration activities and the selection of appropriate indicators, spatial units and timescales (Moore and Spires 2000).

This research raises a number of policy questions related to the planning, management and funding of green spaces:

- It challenges the assumption, contained in most planning documents, that a quantitative minimum level of open space provision is the basis of green space planning despite recent guidance (ODPM 2002b, NPFA 2001).
- It calls into question the meaning of designating these spaces as Metropolitan Parks when both provide benefits to overwhelmingly local catchment areas and are managed exclusively by local bodies and agencies. This could change if a London-wide green spaces agency was established to work in partnership with local organisations.
- It suggests that dedicated park-level management is more effective than borough-wide management based on functional divisions, which are present within most parks departments.
- It shows that the structure of current capital and revenue funding is problematic and can be poor value for money. New sources and types of funding need to be explored and made available.

This research started by developing an idea of success that included a wide range of social, economic and environmental outcomes. Although only one of many possible definitions of success, it is clear from this research that those involved feel that the parks should perform a far wider role than that of a natural relief from the intense urbanity surrounding them. In fact despite their openness, these green spaces are often viewed by those living nearby with fear and apprehension. Even if they are safe, they need to provide interest, involvement and effective programme management to consistently attract users.

The paternalistic desire of the early planners to provide people most deprived of open space with a local park seems with hindsight to be viewing the issue of green space provision simplistically. Perhaps it is unfair to blame the authors, as their plan was not carried through in any form that they would have recognised. However the green legacy of the 1943 County of London Plan has clearly been mixed, involving the demolition and removal of many thousands of workplaces and homes and the creation of open spaces, which for long periods have remained unloved and uncared for. However, this thesis has found, that given the coalescence of a number of factors, these parks can fulfil their potential.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Detailed Literature Review of Benefits of Urban Green Spaces

#### Wider social benefits

Many have argued that along with the wider public realm, parks are places for activities, reflection, social interaction and the creation of a public consciousness and collective memory (Carmona et al 2003, Kostof 1992). They perform a wide range of cultural, health, community and learning functions through active and passive and formal and informal activities. Questionnaires have shown that different people use parks in different ways, depending on their gender, age, ethnicity and groups size and structure (Worpole & Greenhalgh 1995). In the UK, researchers estimate that between 1.5 and 2.5 billion visits are made to urban parks each year and 50 per cent of people saying they visited more than once a week (Woolley 2003).

For children open spaces offer important arenas for the development of social and collaborative skills as well as an understanding of risk (CABE Space 2003). Dunnnett et al (2002) note in several of their case studies that the creation or improvement of parks and smaller urban green spaces was the catalyst for the creation of spin-off social enterprises.

#### Wider economic effects

Woolley (2003) describes evidence for the direct economic benefits in terms of employment of green space staff and designers, the potential productive use of spaces as allotments or farms and the impact through tourism.

However the indirect effects are far more significant. Parks have long been created as a means of stimulating economic vitality. Regents Park, Birkenhead Park, and the Minneapolis Park System were all developed as a way of creating additional land value (Tate 2001). In 2005 CABE Space published research which used property prices as an indication of the desirability of an area. This found that property directly adjacent to 'significantly improved' parks added around five to seven per cent premium relative to equivalent homes that were in the same market area but further away. Another study which took into account all green spaces irrespective of quality found far weaker, if still positive, correlation between house prices and green space provision in London (GLA 2003).

Flagship public spaces and parks have credited with helping improve the fortunes of Barcelona through increased tourism and immigration. Paris, Portland, Copenhagen and many other cities have used investment in parks and public realm to help create images of dynamic, attractive and prosperous cities (Gehl & Gemzoe 2000). These new parks



and squares have often become arenas for an active programme of cultural events and spectacles.

Whilst there is evidence for the positive impact of green space, many recognised that poor quality green spaces have negative effects if poorly formed or maintained. They can exacerbate 'feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness on the part of ... city residents ... the quality of a local park often reflects on the state of the surrounding community' (Worpole and Greenhalgh 1995: p67).

### Wider Environmental effects

Urban parks, gardens and trees can have a considerable impact on urban climates as noted by Woolley (2003) although for the purposes of this study, the data is difficult to collect.

Urban green spaces can provide valuable habitats that maintain or even increase biodiversity. This allows people to experience nature close-up improving wellbeing (English Nature 1995). Connecting with London's Nature (GLA 2002) lays out the links between biodiversity and feelings of contentment and health, sustainable development and other factors.

## Appendix B: Static Snapshot Use Analysis

### *Method:*

The method included a pathway analysis of the two parks. These were conducted on the same day, lasted the same duration (35 minutes) and followed the major paths in the park in each case assessing activity that was going on within a 30 metre band either side of the defined pathway. This was to eliminate the fact that planting and topography might obscure people more in Mile End Park compared with Burgess Park which is more open. Each individual using the park was marked roughly in their location and using the following criteria:

- Sports activity:
- Necessary activities (walking, cycling, waiting)
- Optional activities (sitting, sunbathing, playing etc.):
- Social activities: (listening, interacting, watching in both passive and active participation. This could include sports and formal play (i.e. In playgrounds) activities which were noted separately):

Obviously the researcher had to often assess what the person was doing. In general if the person was doing something that also involved somebody else, this was marked as a social activity. No one person was marked more than once on any one survey. This provides a moving snapshot of activity in the two parks in the duration of the study.

Of course the method is not intended to be exact as activity can be skewed by 'one-off' events such as a large group of school children walking through the park. However it can indicate broad differences in the types of use, location of use and patterns of use in the two parks.

In order to build up a better picture, the weekday survey was conducted twice in each park on the same day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. The weather on the chosen day was warm (20 degrees on average) and sunny with a strong breeze. It is obvious that use of an urban park is heavily weather dependent and this should be viewed as an 'optimal' weekday for heavy use. The day was also selected to exclude special events and be during term-time. These would all be important factors that would have an influence on the way in which the parks were used.

Due to the nature and the time limits of the study, it was not possible to count users of the buildings in the parks including the Stadium at Mile End (which is separate from the park anyway).

### *Results*

In both surveys, Mile End Park proved approximately 15% more used than Burgess Park.

Critically Mile End Park had 23% more optional and social activities going on than in Burgess Park with 60% of all individuals taking part in a social activity. This was partly due to higher amounts of play – as the southern Play Park is more successful. Also there were other social activities, many of these were groups of young people, typically of Bangladeshi origin, either courting or talking with their friends. The most popular area for this was in and around the Terraced Gardens south of the Green Bridge.

Park	Mile End	Mile End	Burgess	Burgess
Weather	Warm, sunny, breezy			
Day	Monday	Monday	Monday	Monday
Date	13-Jun	13-Jun	13-Jun	13-Jun
Start	1246	1430	1130	1610
End	1320	1505	1205	1645
Walkers	35	39	29	32
Cyclists	10	6	10	16
Total Necessary	45	45	39	48
Optional	9	10	10	14
Sport social	5	11	8	12
Play social	15	30	3	12
Non-sport social	44	58	16	38
Total social	64	99	27	62
Total social and optional	73	109	37	76
Total	118	154	76	124
		13%		24%
% necessary	38%	29%	51%	39%
% optional	8%	6%	13%	11%
% social	54%	64%	36%	50%
Of necessary				
% cyclists	22%	13%	26%	33%
Of Social				
% sportspeople	8%	11%	30%	19%
% play	23%	30%	11%	19%

Mile End Total	Burgess Park total	Mile End/Burgess variance	Overall Total
74	61	10%	135
16	26	-24%	42
90	87	2%	177
19	24	-12%	43
16	20	-11%	36
45	15	50%	60
102	54	31%	156
163	89	29%	252
182	113	23%	295
272	200	15%	472
33%	44%	-28%	38%
7%	12%	-55%	9%
60%	45%	29%	53%
18%	30%	-51%	24%
10%	22%	-89%	14%
28%	17%	45%	24%

In general activity increased by around one fifth between the morning and afternoon periods, the greatest increase being in social activities.

### *Mile End*

The activity in Mile End Park seems to work differently in each different space. For the visitor the park itself stretches the conception of existing as a single entity despite the best efforts to unite the park through design elements such as the spinal path, building design and signage. The park itself does not work as a green link in the way envisaged by Forshaw and Abercrombie because of the physical separation of buildings, roads and lack of visual continuity throughout and either side of the park. The tow path takes the majority of 'through' pedestrian (often runners) and bicycle traffic. There are several sections of the park where the opportunity to improve the relationship between the canal and towpath was not taken. The meandering nature of the spinal path does not encourage cycle commuters and the segregated path design is largely redundant as pedestrians use either side without any conflicts occurring.

The park can be understood as a series of separate gardens, each of which is distinct

and sometimes poorly connected. Each of these spaces is used in a different way with different levels of success:

- The southern Play Park is successful although should be considered a separate entity due to the gap between this and the next piece of open space north of the Stadium. The stadium itself is not integrated into the park, with key entrances onto the road rather than the park.
- In general the most successful section in terms of use is between the Stadium and the Green Bridge. This area includes both the Terraced Gardens (with water features, attractive planting and small private gathering areas) and the hub of the Green Bridge. This area is best connected across the canal to the council estates to the west.
- The Green Bridge is an important icon for the park, and also serves for those who don't want to cross the Mile End Road. However it is used primarily by those who are already in the park, not by those who are walking up Burdett Road. This is due to a lack of appropriate pathways.
- The Arts Park is underused and certainly does not fulfil its original aim. The best-used areas are close to the canal.
- The Ecology Park works relatively well as a quiet and peaceful space, although the shuttered and vandalised building somewhat blights the space.
- The Arena space fails to work effectively as either an open grassed area for games or an arena (especially as the mounds were allowed to grow wild). There is a lack of integration with the leisure uses which were developed in parallel with the park.

In general the north of the park is underused – partly as an effect of Victoria Park to the north and the lack of connectivity across the canal and to adjacent streets.

### *Burgess Park*

Like Mile End Park, the complexities of land assembly and existing buildings and infrastructure have meant that different parts of the park work in radically different ways. As a green link, the park itself works well, although poor connections with other streets – especially at its east end mean that it is not as used as it could be (for example for those cycling from South East London to West or South West London. Overall the park suffers from a lack of activity in several large areas including its central open space. The smaller spaces around (and frequently at the back) of buildings on Oakley Place and Parkhouse Street do not work well – including the William IV pub on Albany road:

- The Avenue is amongst the most successful areas in the park, with most of the use – especially walking and cycling – occurring here. The generous width, high visibility and high quality of the surface mean that this also is used by many families with children and

those learning to cycle or roller-skate. The lack of width of the underpass is unfortunate although it doesn't seem to cause any severance. The Avenue does not continue effectively across Sumner Road although it goes on to form the Surrey Canal Walk.

- The lake and adjacent picnic spots work relatively well, with fishermen present almost constantly and many others using the benches and spaces to enjoy the presence of what is a large body of water.
- The Old Kent Road entrance area (1993) is obviously signed although often frequented by street drinkers. However the contoured area is popular for relaxing on a hot day. The park is heavily planted in this area with poor visibility and access from Coburg Road and Albany Road.
- The central open space is popular for football and rugby during the weekend despite the often poor quality surface. During the week, this area is largely unused
- Chumleigh Gardens is the key asset for the park although underused and largely unknown. Its fine multi-cultural gardens should be a draw from the sub-region. However its café is underused due to a lack of marketing (although the free jazz events are popular).
- The play area contains a mixture of different facilities. The play area is in dire need of a rebuild and the Southwark Play Service building, go-kart track and bike track are not integrated with the rest of the park.
- The Albany Road Gardens area is poorly used and blighted by the William IV pub
- Tennis courts relatively well-used
- Poor entrance area onto Camberwell Road



## Appendix C: Press Review

### *Aim*

To understand how the two case study parks have been reported by the national and local media.

### *Introduction*

The way in which the quality of the public realm – in this case of a park – affects the image of a place is discussed elsewhere in this thesis. However the image of a place is important in both determining how attractive it is for outsiders to come to live, work or visit as well as the perception of place by existing residents and workers. The image of a place is reflected in the general discourse on that place which is both reflected in and influenced by the way in which the media report on a place. Analysis of the national print press offers a broad-brush insight into this public perception.

### *Methodology*

Use of Lexis-Nexus and other local newspaper websites to count the number and ascertain the content of the news reports relating to the two parks in the period 1995-2000. These were split into two broad periods:

- 1995-2000: relates to the period in which Mile End Park was being planned and constructed
- 2000-2005: relates primarily to the use of both parks in more or less their current states

Press searches for periods prior to 1995 are less available.

Each article was analysed along two dimensions:

- **Relevance:** This relates to the extent to which the article discussed the park in question. This could range from 'dominant' – which implies that the park was the overwhelming topic of the article, 'major' – which means that the park was not the dominant feature of the article but was mentioned three or more times and 'minor' – which means that the park was mentioned once or twice.
- **Opinion:** This relates to whether the park was put across in a positive light or otherwise. This is a more subjective matter. The method used here was to read the article in full and understand if something specific was being said about the park. If the park was just mentioned in passing with little or no value judgement then this was put into a separate category

The newspapers analysed included the UK national press (Times, Sunday Times,

Guardian, Observer, Telegraph, Sunday Telegraph, Independent, Independent on Sunday, Sun, News of the World, Daily Mail, Mail on Sunday, Daily Express, Daily Mirror, Morning Star, Economist, as well as selected local papers – Tower Hamlets Reporter, Evening Standard and others.

### *Analysis*

What is obvious is that Mile End Park has received both more and much better press than Burgess Park. Also that for Mile End Park the amount of positive press has increased dramatically over time.

### *Mile End Park*

A critical feature in all of the articles where the park was the main topic and many of the positive articles was the Green Bridge. This icon of the renaissance of the park has stimulated headlines such as 'Green architect wins approval for a bridge of trees to breathe life back into 90-acre lung in the capital' (Hamilton 1997), 'East-enders have fallen for Piers Gough's 'Urban Sculpture'' (Powell, 1999), 'The other Millennium Bridge – a true example of community support (Morrison 2000), 'Why did the park cross the road?' (Rattray 2000) and 'Green bridge illuminates urban wasteland' (Vidal 2000).

Other articles have concentrated on the general transformation of the park - 'Green oasis flourishes in desert of East End' (Graves 2000) and 'From bombsite to urban Eden' (Durham 1999).

More recent articles have focused on the investment in staff and management - 'Urban Regeneration Special Report: Meet the urban space rangers' (Flanagan 2004) and 'Space craft: Design-led and 'soft' alternatives to security cameras and fencing (Salman 2004).

Many articles mention Mile End Park in passing as a positive feature in the buoyant property market that surrounds the area. Although the park is not described in detail, adjectives such as regenerated or improved are used. The increase in interest in the local area and the larger number of events – especially arts events mean that the number of incidental mentions has also increased over time.

The only recent negative press that Mile End Park has received has been minor and related to the delay in completing Millennium Projects.

### *Burgess Park*

Burgess Park has far less press with only five major mentions or 'dominant' national press articles between 1995 and 2005 compared with fourteen for Mile End Park. These related to the creation of Park Rangers (now subsumed into the Community Warden scheme) and a new Barratt's development and the local rugby squad. Most articles mentioned Burgess Park

in passing – either as a venue for multicultural events, as an amenity in an up and coming area or as the possible route that Damilola Taylor's killers took after the murder. In some ways the first and second topics give a more positive connotation whilst the last a distinctive negative – although this is highly subjective as the focus for both is not the park.

### *Conclusions*

The above analysis shows that the transformation of Mile End Park has successfully captured the imagination of the press and increased its exposure in a positive light. A major cause of this is the iconic nature of the Green Bridge but also featuring in 'best practice' guidance from organisations such as CABI Space. This is a notable feat given the harsh criticism that has appeared in the press for many of the other high profile Millennium Commission projects. The park also seems to be a positive draw in terms of press coverage of the adjacent residential property market.

Despite its relatively large size and designation as a park of metropolitan importance, Burgess Park's press is minimal and more or less neutral. This both reflects and reinforces the park's low profile in both local and regional imagination and knowledge. Despite the park being in a recognised area of rapidly rising property prices, the park is hardly mentioned as a positive selling point.

## Appendix D: List of Interviewees

Group	Name	Role
Park managers and council officers	Michael Rowan	Park Director, Mile End Park, LBTH
	Ros Brewer	Landscape Architect, LBTH
	Rayne Passmore	Head Ranger, Mile End Park, LBTH
	Jon Sheaff	Parks Manager, LBS
	Steve Cahalan	North west Southwark Parks Manager, LBS
	Roy Wayre	Community Warden manager for Parks, LBS
	David Foreman	Head of physical regeneration, Aylesbury NDC
	Joyce Bellamy	Ex Head of Open Spaces, GLC, now vice-chair of Friends of Burgess Park.
Designers	Piers Gough	Director, CZWG Architects
	Hugo Nowell	Landscape architect, Community Land Use
Community Groups	Andy Lyon	Chair, Friends of Mile End Park
	Joan Griffiths	Chair, Mile End Old Town Residents Association
	James Da Costa	Chair, Friends of Burgess Park
	Gary Saward	Manager, Wickway Community Centre
Environmental trusts	Jon Aldenton	Environment Trust
	Irene Seijo	Groundwork Southwark
Private sector and other interests	Brian Cheetham	Brian Cheetham Partnership, project manager for Mile End Park
	Philip Ogden	Pro Vice-Chancellor, Queen Mary College.
	Sandra Hounsom	Sales negotiator, Barratt Homes.
	Estate Agents	
Academics	Ken Worpole	Renowned author on public-space and political issues
	Michael Evamy	Author of CABA Space study (2005a).

## Appendix E: Assessment of Mile End Park

### *The social dimension*

#### *Use*

All the interviewees agreed that use of the park had increased significantly since redevelopment although there is no quantitative survey data to support this. However several recognised that the park was not as well used as it could be, especially the Arts and Ecology buildings. The survey conducted for this research found relatively higher numbers of users than Burgess Park and 60 per cent of people doing optional activities such as relaxing, reading, talking and playing games.

The park displays differing patterns of use in each area and users tend to visit only the parts nearest their homes. In general the south of the park is better used than the north with popular areas such as the Children's Park and the Terraced Gardens. Popular routes for cyclists, joggers and walkers include the towpath and the Solebay Bridge path that cuts directly across the park.

#### *Inclusion and safety*

It is difficult to state categorically whether the park is an inclusive place – however a wide range of people seemed to be using the park with the significant local Bangladeshi community being well represented. Inclusive play sessions are run in the Children's Park. The catchment of the park is unclear. Those interviewed felt that the overwhelming majority of the users tended to be from the very local area. Those that come from further afield are attracted by some of the amenities such as the climbing wall, the stadium and Venus in the Park restaurant.

Residents attending a community consultation event in 2002 highlighted Mile End Park as a place where they felt particularly unsafe (source TBC). However all those interviewed agreed that the park felt like a much safer place to be since the advent of on-site rangers in 2004. Interviews with the rangers revealed that although there was some petty anti-social behaviour, criminal activity was very rare indeed. This view is supported by the map of reported crimes in Tower Hamlets.



## London Borough of Tower Hamlets

All Notifiable Crime

April 2003 to March 2004

Data source: Metropolitan Police

Caring Crime **TOGETHER**  
The Tower Hamlets Partnership

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map is strictly prohibited  
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Tower Hamlets 2004



The map of crime for Tower Hamlets shows that the park does not have significant levels of reported crime. The nearest crime hotspot is around Mile End Underground station.

### *Learning and Capacity Building*

The park is starting to become an important resource in the borough, although it has potential to develop further. Pond-dipping bulb-planting and other activities for children have started. A Connexions centre is being run out of three recycled containers in the park. For adults, an NDC funded horticultural training programme for thirty park rangers has been completed, but not repeated due to lack of resources. There are no direct educational links with Queen Mary's College, despite its proximity.

### *Healthier Living*

There is limited evidence for the impact of the park on healthy living, although the play areas and flat grassy areas are well used for informal play and sport. The canal towpath is heavily used for cycling, walking and jogging. The Children's Pavilion includes a busy child psychologist office, which provides a means of tackling these issues in less stressful environment.

### *The economic dimension*

#### *Impact on image of the area*

Several interviewees thought that the redevelopment of the park has transformed the image of the area. National and local press coverage increased during and has become more positive and since the opening in 2000. Articles such as 'Green oasis flourishes in desert of East End' (Graves 2000) and 'From bombsite to urban Eden' (Durham 1999) praised the exciting design of the new park and compared it favourably with many other Millennium Projects. In many articles, the park was mentioned as a positive reason to invest or live in the area.

Professor Ogden of Queen Mary College stated that the regenerated park has changed perceptions of the area – contributing towards as well as benefiting from more student applications to the college, gentrification of the area and greater awareness and aspirations for better planning and design.

#### *Inward investment and property values*

In terms of property, the area immediately around the park has seen a considerable increase in development pressure and land values, although it is clear that 'to some, the park's renaissance has been pivotal, to others it has been tangential' (Evamy 2004).

There has been a rapid development of luxury apartments and work units west of the Regents Canal and along Copperfield Road that had remained derelict through previous property booms. 'When work started on the park, that definitely attracted developers. They were already in the area, but they hadn't focused around the park' (Martin Eyers quoted in CABA Space 2005 p55). Several developers cited the new park as a key factor: 'The park improvements were central to the conversion ... the main selling point for that was the park. It was a major influence on our acquisition of the site and the development.' (Paul Road quoted in CABA Space 2005: p53).

FDP Savills found that a property that overlooked the park was seven per cent more valuable than one in the same area but away from the park although it is hard to generalise from this study as it took a very small sample. Other evidence demonstrates that the improved park has at least removed a negative aspect of the area and has made properties more saleable due to reduced perception of crime. Savills found that 'agents said that they would mention the park in marketing material and sales pitches if dealing with a property on the park' (CABA Space 2005) and it was used heavily in marketing materials for new residential development. However interviews with four estate agents on Burdett Road found that only one would mention the park when advertising local property. Other factors such as good transport links, proximity to the City and Canary Wharf, and relatively low property values were more important.

### *Business Vitality*

There is mixed evidence for a positive impact on local business vitality. The units under the Green Bridge have been successfully leased at relatively high rates by the council and are popular with and successful. There are very few vacant or run down units along the adjacent roads where a few years ago this was commonplace. Interviews conducted by Michael Evamy (CABE Space 2005a) indicated that local businesses had not seen improved turnover as a result of the renewed park.

### *The environmental dimension*

#### *Biodiversity*

Despite the redevelopment of the park, it remains a site of nature conservation at a borough level, grade 1 (LBTH 2004). However all those interviewed agreed that the park is now far more biodiverse. Andy Lyon, a friend and horticulturalist, estimates that there are perhaps 'hundreds' of times more species in the park now including several rare species of plant and insects on a London scale.

Image: Long grass areas have been created and the timing of cutting and collecting of vegetation is done in such a way as to ensure that insects are able to thrive. In order to respond to criticism that the park wasn't being managed the director instigated a marketing campaign entitled 'Bringing the Countryside to the East End' reinforced with nature walks which helped explain this approach.

#### *Energy and resource use*

The park was designed in order to minimise energy use although quantitative metering data is currently unavailable. Sustainable elements of the park include the earth-covered buildings and an on-site wind turbine. The pavilions are designed to store heat gained during the summer and daytime, and release it slowly during colder times such as the winter and at night-time. This is less efficient than hoped due to infrequent use of the buildings. There is a demonstration wind turbine, which is used to circulate water through the different ponds. The water itself is drawn from an on-site borehole. The park has planning permission for a solar canopy for the go-kart site and three large wind turbines.

Data on how people travel to the park and use of energy for maintenance is not available but the park does not have any car parking spaces and is well connected by tube and bus.

## Appendix F: Funding of Mile End Park

The break down of major sources of income is as follows (MEPP 2000, Millennium Commission website 2005):

Source	Income (£ million)	Notes
Millennium Commission	£12.3	Awarded in 1996. This funding had to be matched
Millennium Commission	£ 2.4	Awarded subsequently to complete the park.
English Partnerships	£ 1.6	
LBTH	£ 1.0	
Bridge House Estates	£ 0.9	This was earmarked for the community consultation process
Bow Wharf	£ 5.0	This was spent on a leisure complex created on a site just north of the park but counted as matched funding.
SRB	£ 2.0	
HSBC	£ 2.0	This was earmarked for the Children's Park
Total	£27.2	

Capital expenditure on Mile End Park (Brian Cheetham Partnership documents 2003)

Item	Cost (£ million)
Design fees	£ 2.6
Highways and enabling works	£ 2.0
Green Bridge	£ 4.0
Terraced Garden	£ 1.2
Ecology Park	£ 3.4
Arts Park	£ 3.5
Children's Park	£ 2.8
Sundry	£ 0.5
Community involvement	£ 0.6
Project management	£ 0.9
Public relations/events	£ 0.5
Total	£ 22.0

## Appendix G: Assessment of Burgess Park

### *The social dimension*

#### *Use*

MORI telephone survey data reveals that 'Burgess Park attracts 3.5 million visits a year from around 132,000 people (Groundwork 2003: p7). However most of the interviewees agreed that the park was underused and this was supported by the survey conducted for this thesis. Use is polarised, as sports, especially football are very popular indeed during the weekend with many formal and informal games going on simultaneously. As a green link, the park itself works well, and is well used by cyclists and joggers in the early morning and evening.

[The survey showed that during a very warm sunny June weekday, there were approximately 300 people using the park during hour long surveys. Even if the assumption is made that use is the same throughout the year (which is obviously not the case as park use is very weather dependent), then the total visits per year would approximately be 1.3 million. ]

The Avenue is amongst the most successful areas in the park, with most of the use – especially walking and cycling – occurring here. The generous width, high visibility and high quality of the surface mean that it's popular with many families with children and those learning to cycle or roller-skate. The lake and adjacent picnic spots work relatively well, with fishermen present almost constantly and many others using the benches and spaces to enjoy the presence of what is a large body of water. The central open space is the main venue for sports and a space for a major event but during the week it remains empty. Much of the rest of the park – including Chumleigh Gardens and the playground – remains underused.

#### *Inclusion and safety*

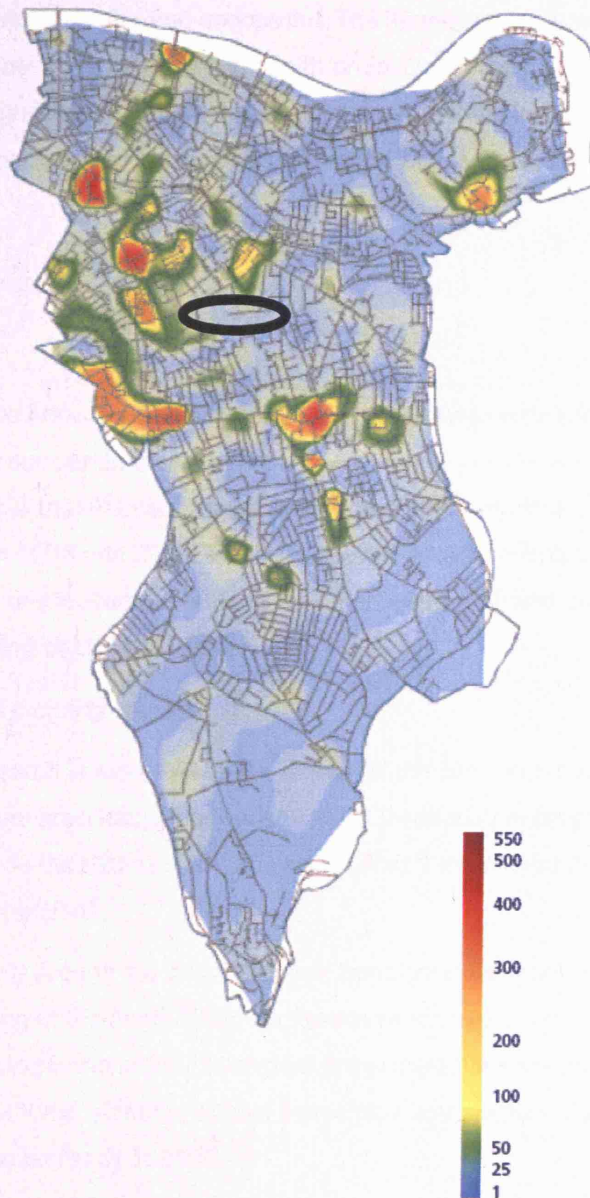
A wide range of people from different backgrounds use the park including many from the areas large Afro-Caribbean population. Those interviewed felt that most users tended to be from the very local area. Chumleigh multicultural gardens have been cited by McMillan (2001) and Risbeth (2001) as an example of how black and ethnic minority people have got involved in green spaces. Several interviewees held the view that the park was hardly used by most residents of the Aylesbury Estate.

All interviewees admitted that crimes, some of them serious, had been committed in the park. These included rape, mugging, vandalism, joy-riding, fly-tipping, rough-sleeping, theft and anti-social behaviour. Illegal encampments of travellers have been an sporadic problem (interview with Roy Wayre). Relative to the rest of Southwark, however, the park is relatively safe as demonstrated by Figure Y. However all the interviewees recognised fear of crime as an important barrier to use. An audit (WDS 2005) of women that live near or use Burgess



Park found a significant perceived fear of crime in the park.

## Street Crime, hotspot map for March 2000 to 2001



Map of Southwark and hotspots: Recorded crime figures indicate that Burgess Park is a relatively safe part of the borough.

### *Learning and capacity building*

In terms of skills and development, the park is host to a Sure Start programme which is soon to be rapidly expanded. Otherwise the park is underused for education – even by the three primary schools that lie immediately adjacent to it.

### *Healthier living*

There is limited evidence for the impact of the park on healthy living, although the play areas and flat grassy areas are well used for informal play and sport. A local youth rugby club – Southwark Tigers is very popular and successful. The Tennis centre is well used having over 200 paid up members. An NDC funded health project uses the park for walking. Art in the Park have successfully set up and managed a Heart Garden in Chumleigh Gardens which operates as a space where local people with heart problems and their families can grow food.

### *The economic dimension*

#### *Image*

The park itself is little known, as acknowledged by all interviewees, and therefore exerts little influence over the surrounding area in the same way that say Greenwich Park does. The press review reveals that the park was only featured in five significant articles in the national press between 1995 and 2005. Mostly Burgess Park was mentioned in passing – either as a venue for multicultural events, as an amenity in an up and coming area or in connection with the killing of Damilola Taylor.

#### *Inward investment and property values*

No quantitative research is available on the impact of the park on property values, but there is evidence that the area has experienced rapidly increasing in property values and developer pressure since the mid-1990s that were artificially depressed due to poor image and poor transport connections.

The area immediately around the park has been transformed through the partial demolition and rebuilding of the North Peckham Estate which has dramatically increased the amount of private housing in the area. Residential developers have snapped up available sites such as the Silverthorne Victorian school conversion completed in 2003 and Barrett's Galleria development to be ready in 2006.

In 2001, Barratt's Homes decided to build luxury apartments at the Galleria, with prices starting at £200,000 for a single bedroom flat – much higher than the average £166,000 for all flats and maisonettes in the area (HM Land Registry). The pricing strategy reflects the value of the park, with properties overlooking the park commanding a £5,000 premium for one-bed properties and £10,000 for two-bed properties. There are floor-to-ceiling window

and balconies and terraces overlooking the park. The sales negotiator stated that the park was a 'very positive selling tool' and was always mentioned to prospective buyers. Over half the flats have been sold with those with park views amongst the quickest to sell. Three-quarters of those purchasing come from Southwark because 'people outside the area still had a bad impression of Peckham – Del Boy and Damilola Taylor' (interview with Sandra Hounsom). The planning decision (LBS 2003) stated that a higher density of housing was acceptable with less private open space because of the proximity of the park. Clearly the park is delivering economic value to the developers. As part of the planning gain, the developers have allocated £50,000 to the park.

#### *Business vitality*

The park has limited on the vitality of local business. Retail and services along the Old Kent Road, Camberwell Road or Walworth Road have no spatial or functional connection with the park. Within the park there are no commercial concessions. The Tennis Centre brings between £8,000 and £10,000 but requires subsidy, as will the new football centre. There is a conference centre and café at Chumleigh Gardens, although this is under-used and generates around £30,000 in revenues (interview with Jon Sheaff).

#### *Employment*

In terms of jobs, the park creates employment for 12 people including contractors, managers, and community wardens.

#### *The environmental dimension*

##### *Biodiversity*

More recent management has tried to diversify habitats by introducing more native species, long grass areas and thickets to attract birds and invertebrates as well as islands in the fishing lake. Several interviewees recognised that this has increased biodiversity. However Burgess Park remains only a site of Borough Importance for biodiversity Grade II. Chumleigh Gardens remains an excellent reservoir of diverse and interesting planting for the park with many plants from around the world featuring in the multicultural gardens.

##### *Energy use and resources*

New buildings are designed to be environmentally friendly with the new football centre having an earth-covered roof incorporating energy and water saving technologies. The park does have a free car park. No further data is available.

## Appendix H: Events in Burgess Park

Event	Theme	Target	Frequency/ Year	Size
Rise	Anti-racism – music	London-wide young people	2005 (1 <sup>st</sup> time)	100,000 people
Carnival del Pueblo	Latin American	London-wide	Annual	Large
Peace on the Streets	Anti-violence	London-wide	2003 (1 <sup>st</sup> time)	10,000
Southwark Irish Festival	Irish	Southwark	2001	Large
Firework displays	Guy Fawkes night	Southwark	Annual	25,000

## Appendix I: Funding of Burgess Park Projects

Table of investments over time (Charlesworth 2000, LBS 2004, 2005, HLF 2001) (websites)

Date	Target	Budget	Sources
1995-2000	Range of small projects	£926,000	Approximately two thirds from LBS. Remainder unknown.
Unknown	Chumleigh Gardens Railings	£50,000	Unknown
2002	Surrey Canal Avenue	£300,000	Unknown
2002	Lime Kiln	£70,000	Heritage Lottery Fund £49,000 Unknown £21,000.
2004	Tennis Centre	£793,849	Sport England: £555,694 Groundwork SRB £20,000 LBS Community Safety £70,000 LBS Parks Capital Programme £148,155
2005	Football Centre	£1,807,350	Football Foundation £925,000 Groundwork SRB and ERDF £113,968 Aylesbury NDC £100,000 LBS £668,382
2005	Sure Start Centre	£2,200,000	£600,000 Aylesbury NDC Unknown remainder
1995-2005	Total	£5,147,000	